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MODERN  
DRUMMER

# MODERN DRUMMER®

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JULY '93

## ALEX VAN HALEN

SINATRA'S  
GREGG FIELD

'93 READERS  
POLL RESULTS

PLUS:

- A LOOK AT FALICON
- IN THE STUDIO WITH MICHAEL BLAIR
- EDDIE BAYERS ON COUNTRY DRUMMING

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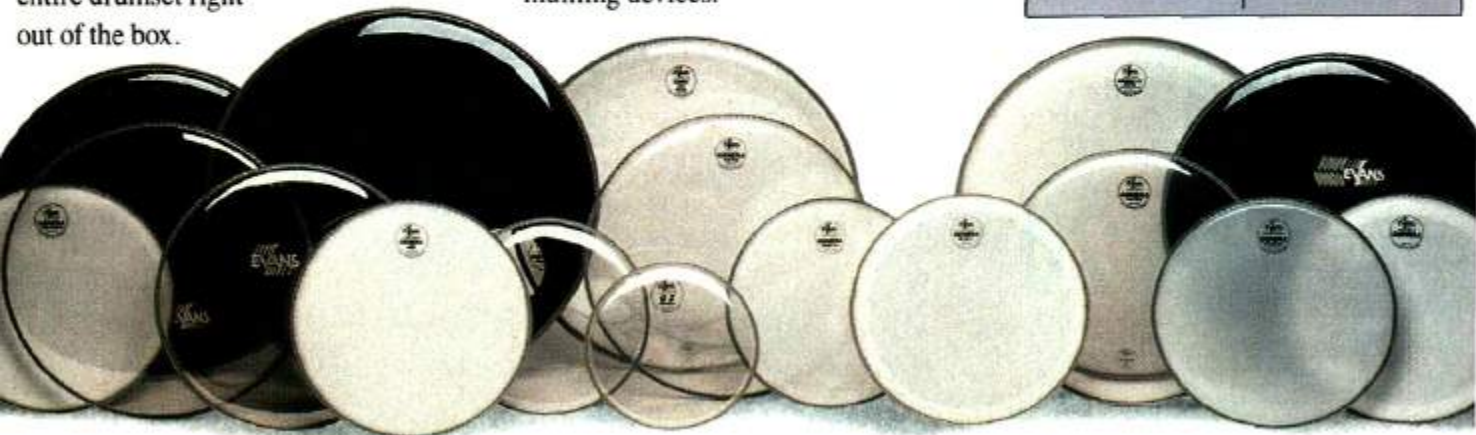
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## FEATURES

### ALEX VAN HALEN

Ain't nothin' like the live thing, and Van Halen has proven it with the release of the first concert album of their fifteen-year history. The last time Alex and MD spoke was a decade ago, so we figured the time was right to get the low-down on the current situation. Check out all AVH has to say in this special story—plus some great live shots and a setup, too!

• *by Adam Budofsky*

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### GREGG FIELD

Providing taste and a solid pulse to gigs like Count Basie, Ray Charles, and Ella Fitzgerald required all of Gregg Field's ample talents. These days he's laying it down for living legend Frank Sinatra. Learn how this special skinsman applies today's skills to timeless music.

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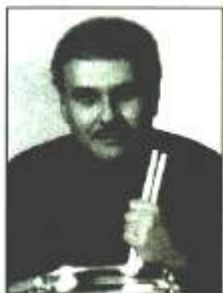
- 88 PORTRAITS**  
Earl Young  
BY WOODY THOMSON







## Drum Country



No doubt about it, country music becomes more popular with every passing year. Though unpopular among some musicians for years—due mostly to its musical simplicity—today's brand of country music has risen above all that and is no longer taken so lightly.

Brought here by the early settlers, country music came to life in the rural South. It was here where poor farmers sang songs of their hardships and handed them down from one generation to the next. From these humble beginnings, with the common themes of lost love and hardship, country music has undergone an incredible transformation. Once extremely regionalized, country music today is a multi-million dollar industry—and a musical idiom that reportedly 60% of Americans listen to on a regular basis.

Over the years we've interviewed many drummers who make their living in the Nashville studios. We've also not ignored those drumming road warriors who criss-cross the nation each year with both name and upcoming country artists. Starting with this issue, however, we're going a bit further by introducing a new column department called *Drum Country*, geared exclusively for the country drumming audience. Obviously, today's country music incorporates a much wider array of musical styles, and the modern country drummer needs to be quite aware of each and every one. We plan to have a series of prominent country drummers writing articles for this new department, and they'll enlighten us on the techniques, specialized knowledge, and high degree of musical and lyrical sensitivity required to be successful on the country music scene.

The first installment of *Drum Country* was written by Eddie Bayers, who graced *MD's* cover in October of '92—and who is one of the busiest drummers in Nashville. Those unfamiliar with Eddie's work should know that he's won *Music Row* magazine's "Drummer Of The Year" award for three consecutive years, and that he can be heard on hit recordings with everyone from Tanya Tucker and Hank Williams, Jr. to Randy Travis and the Judds. In the first article of this series, Eddie takes us back to the origins of country drumming, in the early '50s, when recording technology was finally equipped to handle drums.

We're hopeful *Drum Country* will be welcomed warmly by current and aspiring country drummers, as well as those *MD* readers interested in broadening their horizons by learning a bit more about drumming "country style."

# MODERN DRUMMER

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## ON LARRIE AND JEFF

I commend *Modern Drummer* on the tributes given to the late Larrie Londin and Jeff Porcaro. But I am also a little disturbed that talented and witty drummers, who are also great humanitarians, have to die before I get to read about how fabulous they were.

I'm sure, if Larrie or Jeff had been alive to read your glowing articles about them, they would have blushed and said, "Come on, guys, what's all the fuss about?" But deep down inside, I'm sure it would have brightened their day knowing they were appreciated and loved by so many. Let's face it, we all like a little pat on the back once in a while—especially if we happen to be alive and can feel it.

My suggestion to your editorial staff is this: The next time you are all seated around the table discussing upcoming issues of *MD*, ask yourselves, "If (fill in the name of the drummer of your choice) died today, what would we say about him or her?" And then make the tribute while he or she is still alive to enjoy it.

Audra Supplee  
West Chester PA

*Editor's reply: We couldn't agree more that artists of the caliber of Larrie Londin and Jeff Porcaro should be honored while they are alive, and not just after they have passed away. Had you done a bit of research, you would have noted that Larrie Londin was the subject of a feature article as early as MD's January '78 issue, and appeared again as a cover story in May of 1984. Jeff Porcaro appeared three times in MD over the years: first as a feature story in July of '78, and again as a cover story in both the February '83 and November '88 issues. While these stories were not "tributes" in the manner of those given to Larrie and Jeff following their passing, we feel that a feature covering the current activities, individual aspects, and personal outlook of a given drummer "honors" that drummer just as much as does a "tribute" full of commentary from his or her peers—and provides our readers with the kind of information that promotes their*

*respect and admiration for that drummer during his or her active career.*

## HITTING THE ROAD ON A BUDGET

I just finished reading the March '93 issue, and I want to comment on Mark Zonder's article "Hitting The Road On A Budget." My thanks to Mark for putting together such a *practical* piece, and my thanks to *MD* for presenting it. I've been playing the drums for just over a year, and I'm open to receiving as many tips as possible from those drummers who have been through it all, as Mark obviously has. In addition to the rich content of his article, Mark's writing style is also a blessing. He writes with an air of authority that exudes confidence and a desire to pass along his experience. (I remember also enjoying Mark's interview in the July '92 issue.)

Another aspect of *MD* that I appreciate is the eclecticism of its editorial content. I'm primarily a fan of rock 'n' roll, but I can't escape the fact that reading about drummers who play other genres of music is a good education for me. It is a constant struggle to remain open-minded, and *MD* helps me in this area.

Scott Hausrath  
Pasadena CA

## STEPHEN PERKINS

Thanks so much for the Stephen Perkins interview in your March issue. I was fortunate enough to see Jane's Addiction on their last tour in '91. Now I'm anxiously awaiting the release of the Porno For Pyros project.

I'd also like to thank you for the great magazine. Since moving to Alaska three years ago, my ability to see concerts and shows has been quite limited. Fortunately, I can still find my favorite players in your pages. Keep up the cutting-edge coverage!

Charlie McRee  
Ketchikan AK

## KENNY HAIR-ENOUGH?

Here's a picture I snapped at the 1993 NAMM show in Anaheim, California, and that I thought your readers might enjoy. It shows Kenny Aronoff "borrowing" Jonathan Mover's hair. Why go to a hair clinic when you have friends like this?

Craig Allen  
Mgr. - The Drum Shop  
Struthers OH



## HELLO FROM THE NEW EUROPE

I'm a young drummer from eastern Europe. I love jazz, funk, and fusion music, and my idols are Mssrs. Husband, Colaiuta, Chambers, Weckl, Porcaro, Bissonette—and many more. But here in this land there is a lack of any information about them. A month ago I wrote to Gary Husband in care of *MD*, and today I received a beautiful letter from him. I want to thank you very much, and say that it's great that *MD*, placed as you are on the other side of the globe, would help me to find a new inspiration and the power to carry on and practice.

I would like any interested drummers from the USA (or elsewhere) to correspond with me. I'm 21, and I would love to exchange information, tapes, videos, charts, etc. with drummers from around the world.

Pecha Vladimir  
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## Max Weinberg

When drummer Max Weinberg decided to put together an E Street Revue, his intention was not to re-create the band that for nearly two decades backed up Bruce Springsteen. His goal was to bring back to life the "E Street style" of rock 'n' roll and couple it with the classic format of the old pop package shows of the 1950s and early '60s.

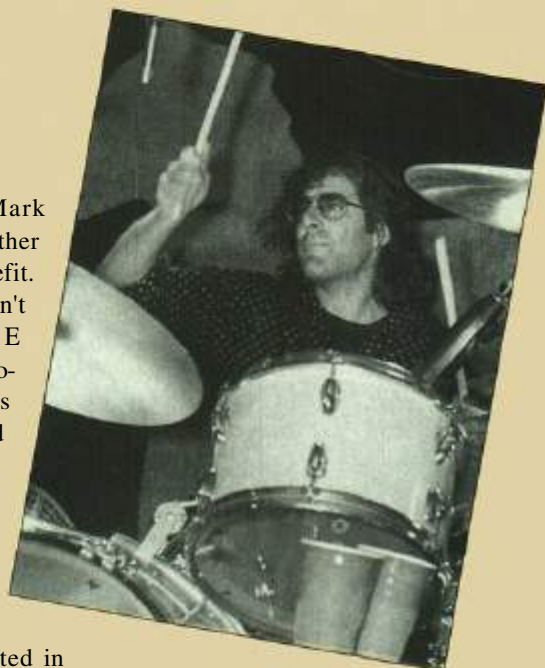
Made up of former E Street Band musicians and assorted Sidemen, the E Street Revue made its debut performance at the Count Basie Theatre in Red Bank, New Jersey late last year. The show, which featured the legendary voices of Ronnie Spector, Darlene Love, Percy Sledge, Johnny Rivers, and Chuck Jackson, was a benefit for New York radio station WXRK-FM (a.k.a. K-Rock) and its annual Hungerthon drive to help eradicate world hunger.

According to Weinberg, the idea to bring together members of the E Street Band in a revue style was hatched when

K-Rock program director Mark Chernoff asked Weinberg if his other band, Killer Joe, would play the benefit. Weinberg told Chernoff that wasn't possible, but getting the core of the E Street Band to play—Weinberg, saxophonist Clarence Clemmons, bass player Garry Tallent, and keyboard player Danny Federici—*might*.

"We had just finished working with Little Steven [Van Zandt] on the *Home Alone 2* soundtrack," Weinberg explains. "Since it went so well, I thought there was a chance the guys would be interested in doing the show. As it turned out, they were."

That the benefit sold out in just a couple of days and was so warmly received by the media has made Weinberg wonder if there is enough of a demand for the E Street Revue to take their show on the road and perhaps even make an album. "Working with Danny, Garry, and



Clarence has always been a lot of fun for me," says Weinberg. "I think we have to take some time and evaluate just how everything sounded and how everyone felt playing together again on stage. At this point it would be foolish to rule anything out. We'll just have to see what happens."

• Robert Santelli

## Jerry McBroom

You would think that winning a Dove award for best single and having your new album hailed as the best rock/metal album to ever come out of Christian music would fill you with confidence. But Jerry McBroom, drummer with Bride, is somewhat overwhelmed by the band's success. "It's flipping me out," he admits. "None of us thought we had much chance of winning the Dove, because we were up against Stryper and King's X. I grew up listening to Christian rock, and I would read magazine articles about the bands and think they were on another level. Now we're having stuff like that written about us, but I still think those other guys must be above me, because I'm just a regular guy who's struggling to pay the bills."

But as Bride's albums *Kinetic Faith* and *Snakes In The Playground* attest, McBroom is a solid drummer who mixes the power of John Bonham with the finesse of Steve Smith. "Bonham and Smith were two of my biggest influences," McBroom says. "I especially like the way Steve made Journey sound like it was on fire, even when he wasn't playing much in terms of number of notes. My goal is to make the song feel good and propel the band.

With Bride, it's really cool to not have any restrictions on the way I play."

He is also happy to be with a band that delivers a positive message. "There's so much negative stuff in the rock/metal genre," he says. "We like that style of music, but want to do something more positive. We don't condemn anyone or preach, we just try to be an alternative and let people know there's another way."

But it's still rock 'n' roll. "We were playing this big, outdoor festival called Cornerstone," McBroom recalls. "At the end of our set, our bass player pulled my drums off the riser and then he did a stage dive into the audience. Since my drums were in a pile in front of me, I decided that I would stage dive too. It was the first time I'd ever tried anything like that, but I got caught up in the moment. So I ran across the stage and dived into the audience, and it was like Moses parting the Red Sea. All the people separated in front of me, and I landed flat on the ground. The next day, I was black and blue all over. So from now on, I'm sticking with drumming."

• Rick Mattingly

## Phil Leavitt

"During crab season, this rowdy bunch of coast guards, cannery workers, and insane fishermen would go out and risk life and limb—and if they came back alive, they would be loaded with cash and have nowhere to go but the bar. And they'd just go crazy. We'd play six sets a night, six nights a week to these guys. It was colorful...good for the chops." So recalls drummer Phil Leavitt of the band Dada, whose debut album, *Puzzle*, is pricking up quite a few ears these days.

Leavitt's recollections are of the Alaska port town of Kodiak, where a cover band

he was in was "stationed" for two months. Fortunately for Phil, Dada's recent success had made such grueling playing circumstances a thing of the past, at least for the time being. *Puzzle's* first single, "Diz Knee Land," prominently features Phil's playing during a simple but effective tom fill that mimics Michael Gurley's guitar hook. "I feel really good about that moment on the record," says Phil proudly. "It's pretty gratifying when you come up with something that really helps a song along."

Phil's influence can also be heard on a

well-placed, past-the-bar-line fill, which adds tension to the track. "I'll occasionally do that," Leavitt says, "and it just seemed to work at that moment. At rehearsal, the other guys thought it was a mistake, but I said, 'No, it'll be cool if we just stay on this 16th-note thing and jam it home.' And people seem to like it."

That's not all people seem to like. As we speak, Dada is on the road spreading the word. With any luck, Leavitt will be able to steer clear of the coast guard, canneries, and crabs for a long while.

• Adam Budofsky

## Phil Varone

Even though their first hit single, "Love Will Find A Way," is not a song that boasts much drumming, Phil Varone of Saigon Kick is definitely one happy guy. The band recently held the top spot on MTV's Most Requested Video chart for their follow-up single "All I Want," which is outselling "Love Will Find A Way," and they recently opened for Extreme on an American tour. With their strange moniker and a ballad for their first big single, Saigon Kick are getting real big, real quickly within metal and pop circles alike.

"'Love Will Find A Way' has little drumming on it," admits Varone from his home in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where Saigon Kick is based. However, any question of Varone's abilities are put to rest upon listening to the band's more rhythm-

conscious tracks on their latest album, *Lizard*. It's clear that Phil knows how to use his playing to get maximum effect out of the music. "Our first single was the lightest thing we play," says Phil. "When we play live, people get an hour and twenty-five minutes of heavy stuff, and that one ballad. But I still don't put us into any one category because we play a whole spectrum of styles within the 'heaviness.' Plus we have alternative fans, as well as a mosh pit and stage divers."

Although he wrote only one song ("Bodybag") on *Lizard*, Varone already has ten songs written for the recording of the next album. "The songs are ready to go and are in the demo pit," he says. "We'll see what happens with them." A new album is planned for the end of this year.

• Teri Saccone

## News...

**Tony Braunagel** on an album by Otis Rush.

**Stephen Klong** has been touring with Infectious Grooves. He can also be heard on records by Mari Hamada, Don Cicone, and such jingles as Mattel, Pabst, and Miller.

**Josh Freese** is on Infectious Grooves' current release. He can also be heard on records by School Of Fish and Paul Westerberg, and can be seen on tour with Xtra Large.

**Vinny Pagano** is on John Pagano's MCA debut release.

**John Wackerman** is working with Lindsay Buckingham with a record due in the fall.

In addition to tour drummer **Ron Pangborn, Ric Menck, Fred Maher, Mick Fleetwood, and Pete Thomas** all play on Matthew Sweet's upcoming release.

**Brad Dutz** on new records by Ricki Lee Jones and Grant Geissman, and the new TV show *Sirens*.

**Gary Novak** is now working with Chick Corea.

**Bruce Cox** toured with

Fred Wesley, and is about to go out with Maceo Parker.

We can all start calling **Kenny Aronoff Professor Aronoff**: He'll be teaching undergraduate and graduate percussion classes at Indiana University. The I.U. alumnus will teach when his very busy schedule permits. (A new Mellencamp record is in the works, and Kenny's new videos, *Power Workout: Parts 1 and 2*, have recently been released by D.C.I.)

**Glen Sobel** recorded Tony

MacAlpine's new record, entitled *Madness*. Glen will be on the upcoming MacAlpine tour.

Percussionist **Bashiri Johnson**, currently a member of the Whitney Houston band, has just recorded a project called the *Percussion Beat Library*, to be released as a three-CD set on Grand Street records. It covers percussion grooves ranging from traditional to contemporary, and features **Luis Conte, Kimata Dinizulu, Hinton Battle, and Cyro Baptista**.





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## Rod Morgenstein

**Q** Hey, "Hot Rod," I can't tell you how much I like the *Bring 'Em Back Alive* album. Will there be a *BEBA II*? Your drums sounded great! I'd like to know which Premier series they were. Also, what drums are you going to use on the next Winger tour and LP?

Taylor Russo  
Houston TX

**A** Thanks for writing. The drums on the Dixie Dregs live recording are the new Premier *Signia* line: 22" bass drums, 9x10, 10x12, and 11x13 rack toms, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms, and a 6 1/2x14 snare. The heads on the snare and toms are my new *Signature* heads, also from Premier. I plan to use the same setup for the new Winger recording, plus addition-

al experimentation with 24" bass drums and various snare drums and Sabian cymbals.

A studio Dregs album—all new material—is also in the works. Replacing Dr. Allen Sloan (who recently began his medical practice) on electric violin will be Jerry Goodman (of the Flock and Mahavishnu Orchestra fame).

## Butch Trucks

**Q** Your style is a joy to listen to. When I need some inspiration, "True Gravity" is first-call on the cassette player. In the summer of '92, I had the pleasure of seeing the Allmans in Phoenix. The band was absolutely superb. Your full cymbal sound has always caught my ear, and I was wondering if you could share the make and model of cymbals you use live. Thanks for all the years of great drumming.

Jeff Brydle  
Tucson AZ

**A** Thanks for your letter and the compliments. I love playing "True Gravity" and all of its sister tunes like "Elizabeth Reid," "Whippin' Post," and all of the songs we can really stretch out on. The title of "True Gravity" is taken from *Golf In The Kingdom*, by Michael Murphy. Dickey Betts and I play a lot of golf while on the road, and *Golf In The Kingdom* is



quite a remarkable book that Dickey turned me on to some time ago. Your "True Gravity" refers to the state of mind and body you achieve when you are totally in harmony with yourself and nature. It's that place we can occasionally reach when the band and audience are really in sync—and it's the element of playing with the Allman Brothers Band that I cherish.

On the more mundane level of equipment, I am a Zildjian man. I use a 22" A medium ride, two 18" A medium-thin crashes, a 16" K dark crash, and a pair of 15" *New Beat* hi-hats. I've spent years putting together a drumset that I think sounds good and plays well. But when I'm playing, I do all I can to forget about how they sound and play, and instead concentrate on finding my "True Gravity."

## Bun E. Carlos

**Q** First, I'd like to say that you're my favorite drummer. There are so many questions that I'd like to ask, but let me weed all the possibilities down to this one: On the song "If You Want My Love," during the two breaks when there are no vocals, you do a set of "choppy fills" (for want of a better term). Try as I

might, I can't seem to do them. They seem simple, but when I try to play them, I fall apart and can never get back in time. Could you please tell me the secret to doing them? Thanks for all the great drumming with Cheap Trick.

Steven Mallas  
Peabody MA

**A** Steve, thanks for the letter. The "choppy fills" in "If You Want My Love" were played left-handed on a right-handed drumset. So, try starting with your left hand, instead of your right, when you play the "licks." All the fills are single strokes, by the way. Good luck!



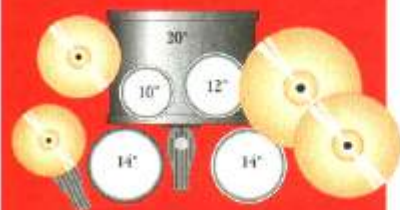
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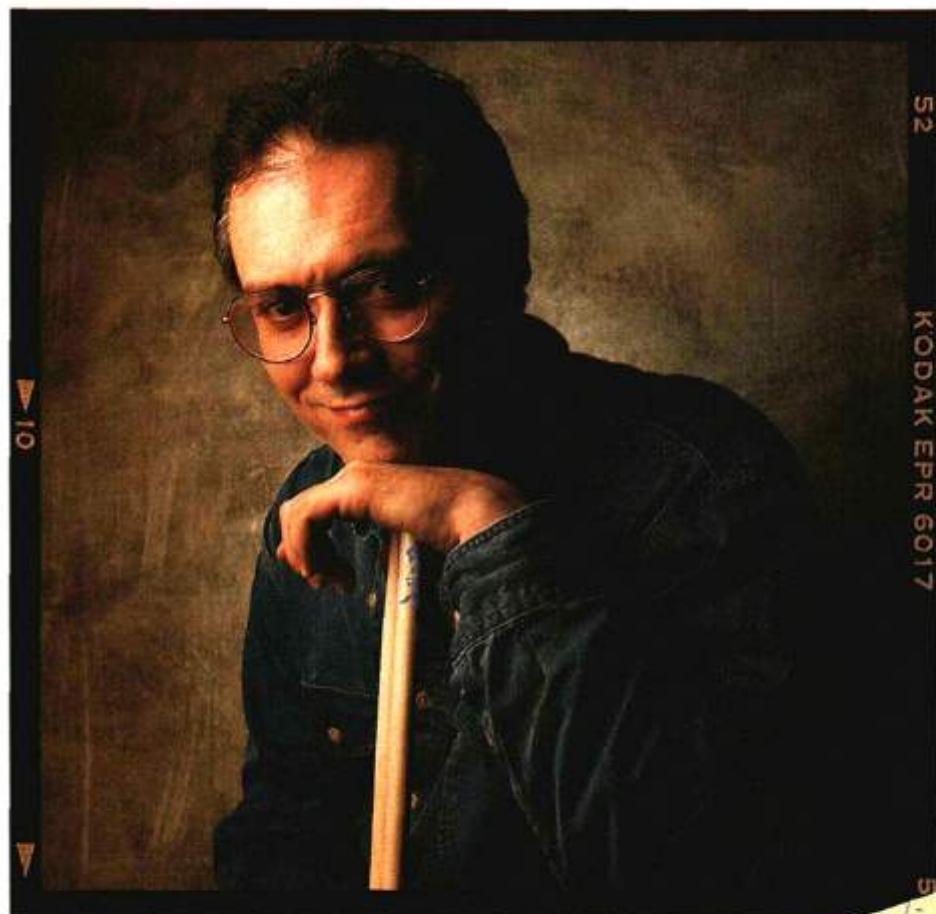
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## PREVENTING CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

**Q** The January '93 issue of *Modern Drummer* featured Dr. Charles Resnick's informative article on carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS). He mentions "conditioning exercises" that may help prevent CTS by strengthening muscles and tendons. What specific exercises are recommended by Dr. Resnick and other therapists? Also, can a prior injury or a condition like tendinitis make a drummer prone to future injuries or conditions such as CTS?

Chris Berra  
Ballwin MO

**A** Dr. Resnick replies, "Conditioning exercises, including stretching exercises, can aid in relaxing tight muscles in the forearm. Doing so may reduce swelling of the tenosynovium, a natural coating that lubricates the tendons found in the carpal tunnel (wrist area). The following exercises should be performed prior to (and intermittently while) playing:

1. Place your palms together with your elbows at the sides and hold that position for five seconds. Then reverse the position and place the back sides of your hands together with your elbows at your sides and hold for another five seconds.

2. With your elbows flexed to 90° and your palms facing up, rotate your wrists slowly and completely—then repeat the process with your palms facing down.

3. Slowly flex and extend your wrists up and down as far as possible.

4. Slowly make a fist, then extend your fingers as far as you can. Hold each position for five to ten seconds. (Grip strength is not a requirement.)

5. Roll your shoulders front to back, then back to front.

6. Stretch your cervical spine and upper back.

"If you engage in weight training on a regular basis, you may want to incorporate a light wrist workout into your regimen. Simply flex and extend your wrists,

using light weights. (Heavy lifting is not necessary, and in fact can be dangerous.) Perform two to four sets of ten to twenty repetitions each.

"If these tips do not prove helpful or realistic, and a systemic disease has been eliminated as the cause of CTS (such as diabetes mellitus, hypothyroidism, or rheumatoid arthritis), then splinting and using oral non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication may be necessary. Failure of these conservative approaches to alleviate symptoms of pain or numbness may indicate the need for surgical intervention. Endoscopic Carpal Tunnel Release is the newest surgical procedure available and appears to be very effective.

"In answer to your second question, tendinitis does not make one prone to developing CTS. An inflammatory condition affecting the tendons, tendinitis is characterized by wrist pain that does not radiate into the finger or arm. CTS, on the other hand, is caused by swelling of the tissues around the tendons of the wrist area. Pain and/or numbness extends into the fingers and occasionally into the upper arm, shoulder, and neck. A common condition that *can* cause CTS, however, involves prior fractures or dislocations of the wrist."

## RACK-MOUNTING LUDWIG DRUMS

**Q** I own a six-piece Ludwig *Super Classic* kit, and would like to obtain a rack system for it. I've checked into racks, and the Pearl rack impresses me the most. Is there some way for me to use this rack—with Pearl tom mounts and cymbal mounts as well—with my existing Ludwig toms? (The reason for using the Pearl tom mounts, as opposed to my Ludwig *Modular* mounts, is that Pearl's tom arms are considerably longer, allowing more flexibility in my setup.) A friend of mine suggested using PureCussion's RIMS mounts. Is this possible?

Mike Davidson  
Columbus GA

**A** Ludwig's *Modular* system employs 1" tubing, while Pearl's tom mounting arms use 7/8" tubing. So it would not be possible to simply mount your toms on the Pearl rack using Pearl arms. You still have several options, however. You can simply mount the toms on the rack using the Ludwig *Modular* hardware you have now, and deal with any positioning limitations this may pose. (Pearl's rack clamps are designed to fit 7/8" tubes exactly, but will open up enough to accommodate 1" tubing securely.) Or, you certainly can employ RIMS mounts on the drums. This would allow you to use *either* Ludwig *or* Pearl arms, since you can get RIMS fittings to accommodate either brand. This might be the most flexible way to go, and would give you the added acoustic benefits that suspended mounting provides.

## SWISS STYLE DRUMMING BOOKS

**Q** I am interested in Swiss Army and Basler style drumming, and would like some information about the Swiss rudimental system. Can you suggest any sources?

Robert Ferraro  
Larchmont NY

**A** You might want to check out *Details Of The Swiss Basle Style Of Drumming*, by Allen C. Benson, which is a good introductory text and costs around \$10. For real depth, however, you can try F. R. Berger's major work, *Das Basler Trommeln*. It's a history of, and complete method book covering, the Basle style. It has text in English and in German, and includes eighty solos. But it's also quite expensive, at around \$60. Check with your local drumshop to see if their method-book catalog includes these titles. If not, you can obtain them through Drums Unlimited, 4928 St. Elmo Ave., Bethesda, MD 20814, (301) 654-2719.





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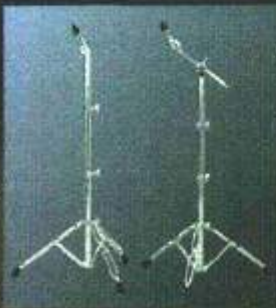
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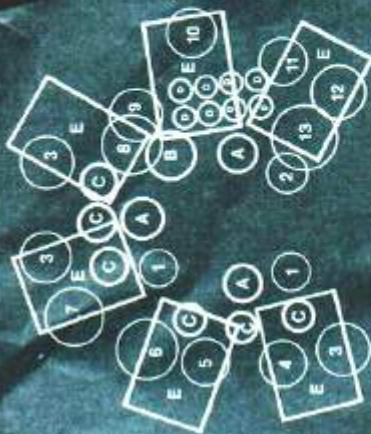
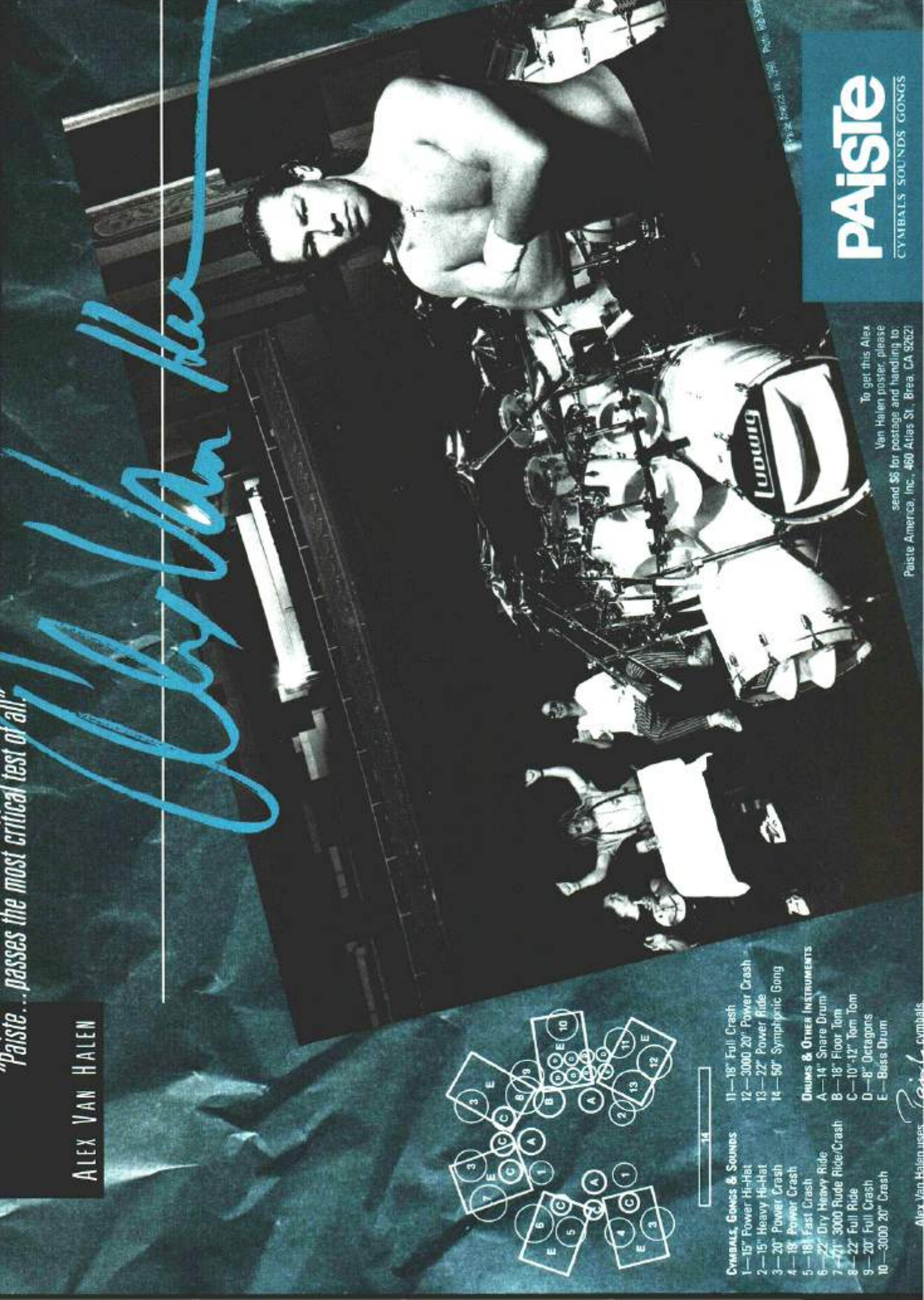
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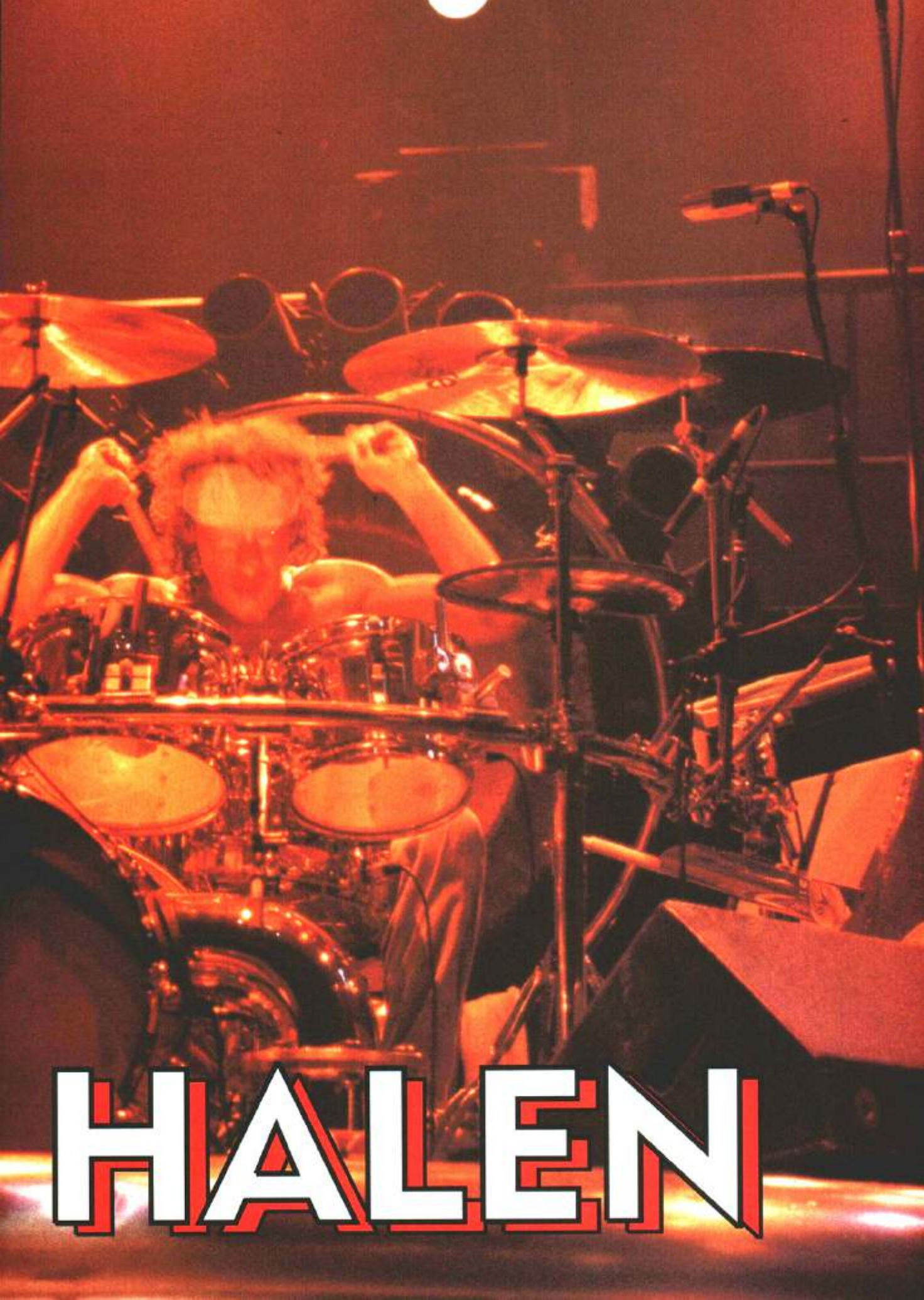


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By Adam Budofsky

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**HALEN**



Finally.

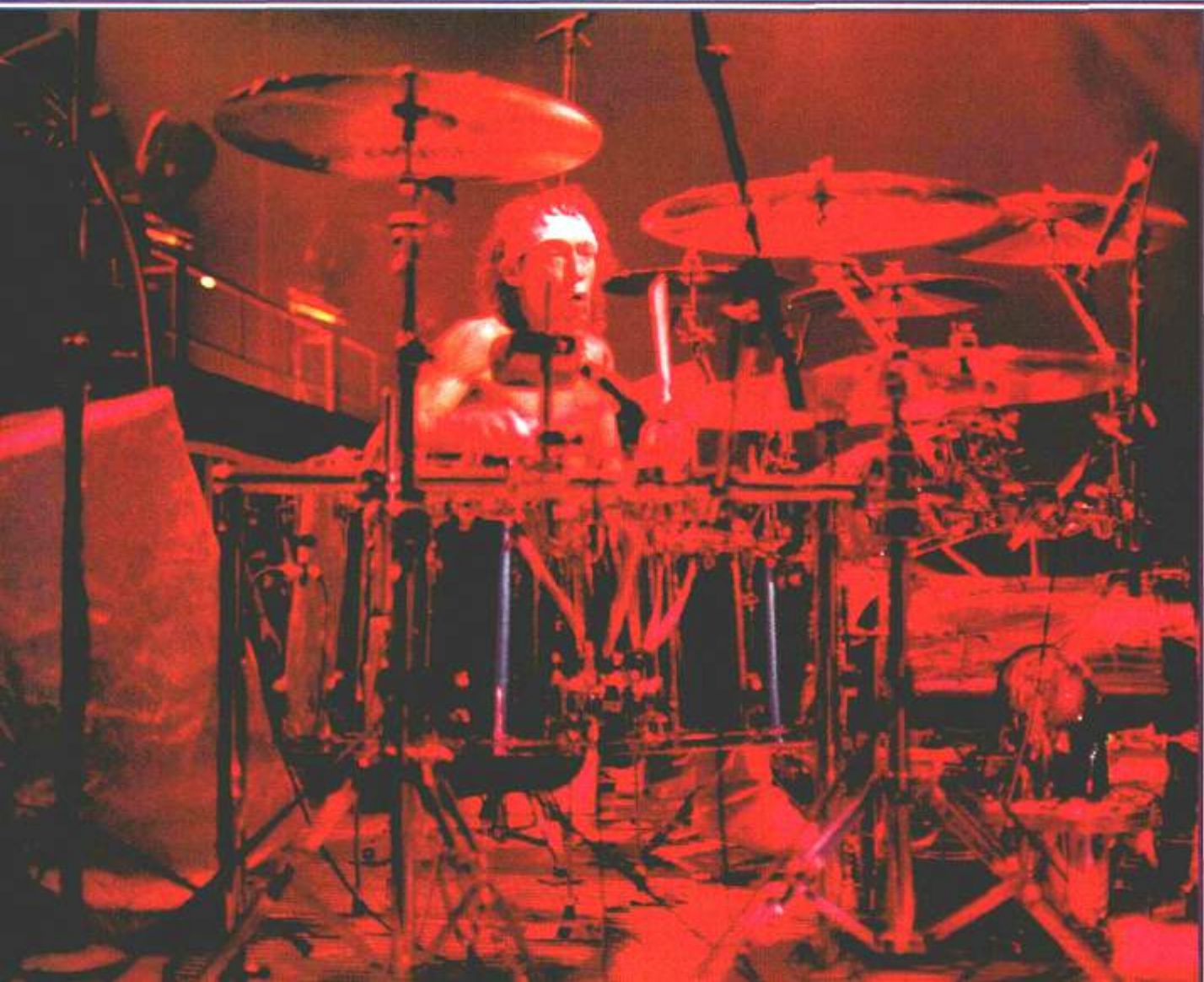
Fifteen years after they blasted onto the scene, Van Halen have at long last come out with a live album. Sure, their records always satisfied the world's appetite for that VH sound—and drum fans continued to eat up Alex Van Halen's powerful studio drum performances. But those who saw Alex, Eddie & Co. live knew that this was where the *real* Van Halen emerged.

Well, the wait is over, for not only have Van Halen dedicated their new *Right Here, Right Now* CD to their live show, they've also released a live video featuring performances from their last tour. So what better time to catch up with Alex Van Halen?

Actually, it's been an entire decade since *MD* and Alex last sat down, and a

lot has gone down since. They changed singers. They built their own studio, 5150, where they've recorded four consecutive number-one albums. Their music—including Alex's drumming—evolved and expanded.

Part of that evolution is due to Van Halen's last studio record, *For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge*, as well as *Right Here Right Now*, being produced by the legendary Andy Johns. This is the man responsible for bringing out the muscle and grace of Ginger Baker and John Bonham. When Andy's name comes up in conversation, it becomes obvious that Alex is still jazzed that he gets to work with him—not just because Alex is a huge fan of those who came before, but because Johns has helped capture



**Alex's sound so well.**

**When we spoke with Alex at 5150 studios earlier this year, torrential rains had been pounding down for three weeks straight on normally sunny southern California. Homes completely unused to such weather were literally sliding into Laurel Canyon. The safety and quiet inside 5150 was comforting. A little while later Alex popped in a copy of the VH live video—and the thunder and lightning started right up again....**

**AB:** Since this new album is live, let's talk a little about the concert situation.

**AVH:** We feel a special bond with the audience. A lot of people just seem to think of it in terms of "Well, let's fill this building and make a lot of money." But I am as much a fan of the music as I am a player. Omar Hakim told a story once about a gig he played along with a lot of big drummers, and some of them were really concerned about outplaying the other guys. But Omar just had this real friendly vibe and said, "Hey man, I'm going to the gig as a fan, too. I'm just gonna enjoy it, and whatever happens happens." That says it all. You take it as it comes—which is basically how we did this live record.

**AB:** The album includes stuff from the past few tours. How did you choose which songs were included?

**AVH:** We picked whatever we felt kicked our butt. But we didn't look for perfection. We just wanted the vibe. If we went into the studio and fixed things, it wouldn't be a live record anymore. If you start patching and pasting, what's the point? And see, we *couldn't* do it because there were these video cameras. [laughs]

**AB:** So you didn't have to deal with that



## Back Then...Right Now

"You do kind of hope that you're going to be the proudest of your most recent records," Alex Van Halen chuckles. And Alex is especially happy with *Right Here, Right Now*, Van Halen's new live album. But for those interested in checking out more of his playing, you need look no further than your local record shop—all of the band's albums are still available and still popular. Following is a list of the albums and artists that Alex says knocked him out when he was young—and continue to today.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Dave Clark Five	"Glad All Over"	Dave Clark
The Beatles	any, especially early stuff	Ringo Starr
3 Dog Night	any	Floyd Sneed
Cream	Fresh Cream, Wheels Of Fire	Ginger Baker
Blind Faith	Blind Faith	Ginger Baker
Cactus	Restrictions	Carmine Appice
Jethro Tull	Stand Up	Clive Bunker
Led Zeppelin	Led Zeppelin I-IV	John Bonham
Deep Purple	Machine Head	Ian Paice
Bill Bruford	Master Strokes	Bill Bruford
The Who	Live At Leeds	Keith Moon

Plus anything with Terry Bozzio, Dennis Chambers, Phil Collins, Louie Bellson, Vinnie Colaiuta, Jeff Porcaro, or Jim Keltner.



sticky ethical stuff.

**AVH:** Yeah, right. But really, what would be the point? This was a step out for us as much as it was for the audience.

**AB:** How come so long for a live album? You guys have been recording for fifteen years.

**AVH:** Well, in '86, when Sammy joined the band, we didn't feel that doing a lot of material prior to that would have been an accurate representation of the band. The reason we never had a live record out before '86 was because the vocals just weren't there. Not to be judgmental, but it just wasn't happening. So we waited until we felt the time was right. Besides, we wanted to get the studio stuff out first. When we're inspired and think the music we come up with is worth listening to, we want to get it out. If you put out a live record, it's gonna get in the way, scheduling-wise, of whatever studio stuff you do. but now we felt that the material was there, and everything just fell into place.

**AB:** How do you keep motivated after touring for so long? Even before the band got signed you were playing out a lot.

**AVH:** It was actually tougher then, because that was five hours

a night—and it wasn't even our own material.

**AB:** So how do you stay so into it for so long? Is it purely the energy off the audience or what?

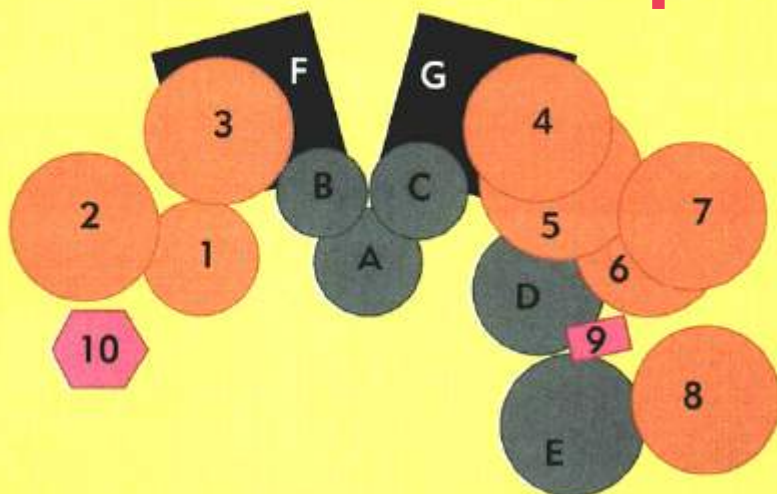
**AVH:** It's a combination of things. I think you're born a musician. It's not something you pick up because you saw it on MTV. It's in your blood. Buddy Rich played until the day he died, more or less. I know a lot of guys who play out maybe once a month, hoping that the record companies will come that particular night and give them a deal. Musicians make music and they go out and play. If you can't handle traveling around the world and living out of a suitcase, then maybe it's not the right thing.

**AB:** How about early on, when you were doing five-hour nights?

**AVH:** I think everybody has a dream, and dreams can be more powerful than anything. It gives you something to aim and focus at, and it makes everything else—the pain, if there is any—it just makes that go away. Playing gives you so much joy, you know, you almost feel guilty. "How come I like what I'm doing so much?"



# Alex's Setup



## Drumset: Ludwig

- A. 8 x 14 snare drum
- B. 8 x 10 tom
- C. 8 x 12 tom
- D. 16 x 16 floor tom
- E. 16 x 18 floor tom
- F. 22 x 20 bass drum
- G. 22 x 20 bass drum

## Cymbals: Paiste

- 1. 15" hi-hat
- 2. 20" crash
- 3. 20" crash
- 4. 20" crash
- 5. 22" ride
- 6. 20" China
- 7. 20" crash
- 8. 20" crash
- 9. cowbell
- 10. Simmons pad

**Hardware:** All Ludwig, except for two Yamaha 850 model bass drum pedals, and a custom rack designed by Gregg Voelker, Alex, and drum tech Rob Kern. May internal miking system used on all drums.

**Heads:** Ludwig *Silver Dots* on snare, 10" and 12" toms, and bass drums, with Remo *Pin-stripes* on floor toms (clear *Ambassadors* on bottoms of all toms)

**Sticks:** Calato Regal Tip *Alex Van Halen* signature sticks (with double butt end)

**Note:** Alex recently went back to using two bass drums, as opposed to a double pedal.

Edward only has five arms, and some of the recorded stuff has keyboards and guitar. Sammy thinks that, to maintain the integrity of the song, it's better if Ed plays it. So every three days or so, Ed plays the keyboard parts during soundcheck while I'm playing, and it goes into a sequencer. But it has all the inconsistencies of him playing; it's not like a track from the record. So it may speed up and slow down or whatever. All I've got to do is hopefully be in the same frame of mind and listen to the inconsistencies. The only thing that bothered me in the beginning was the possibility that, God forbid, the headphones blow up, or something whacko happens—then I can't hear anything. And then we're all up the creek without a paddle. If I'm playing with Ed while he's playing and something goes askew, hey, we'll improvise.

**AB:** Not only is the new album live, but you've also released a live video.

**AVH:** I think the video is probably the most accurate representation of the band. Live playing is just the embodiment of what we're all about. And we take the playing aspect of it very seriously. If somebody isn't playing up to par, they're going to hear about it. On the other side of the coin, the kind of music we make is not exactly quantum theory.

**AB:** Sometimes that makes mistakes more obvious.

**AVH:** It sure does. I'm glad you mentioned that, because people say, "Yeah, this guy just does 2/4 shit, what is this crap?" I remember in one issue of *Modern Drummer*, Mickey Curry was talking about his involvement with certain songs, and that sometimes the simpler it seemed, the more complex and difficult it really was, because things stick out much more than when there's a lot of shit going on.

See, I never really sat down in the beginning with a metronome and did your traditional practicing. What we did was *we played*, and you learn as much, if not more, by playing with other musicians. Because in music there are just so many more things than just being able to play your instrument,

**AB:** The old jazz guys say things like, "We never had to practice because we were always out playing...."

**AVH:** That's right. I actually started out playing jazz. I was thirteen years old on my first paying gig. One of the things I was most impressed by was playing with these guys in their forties. It wasn't a casual, it was a step above that. These guys made records, and I just happened to luck into this kind of thing because the drummer couldn't make it at the last minute.

**AB:** How has the live thing changed over the years?

**AVH:** There are so many things going on live as far as what assaults your senses. There's not only the playing, but the audience is going nuts. For good or bad we are one of the loudest bands—on stage anyway. Out front we are legally limited to 110 or 120 dBs, so we're very careful with that. As far as equipment, a monitor is a monitor—until you get a guy who tweaks the wrong frequencies and your ears go, which does happen. We've been fortunate, though, on the last tour in particular. We had some great guys.

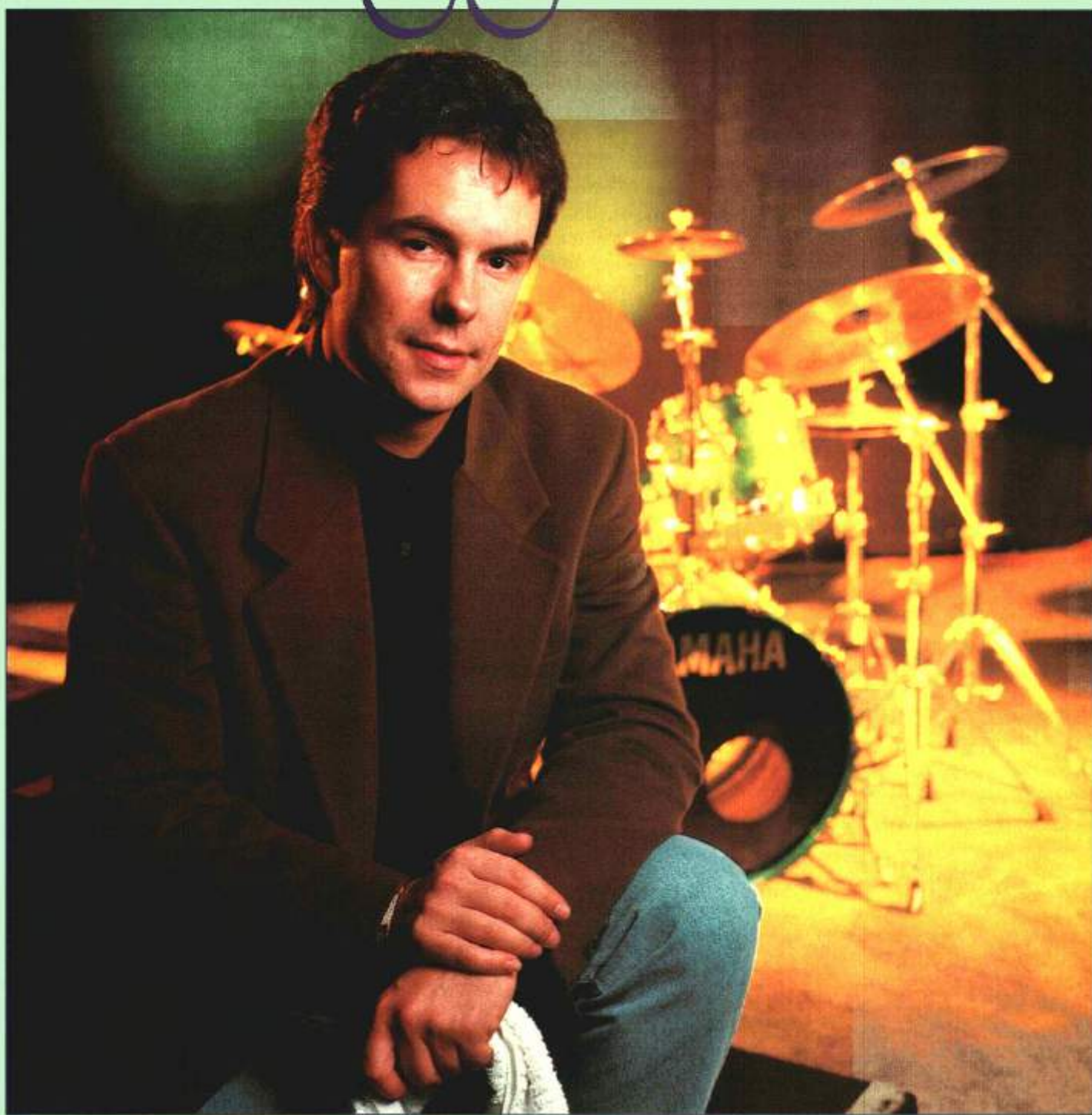
**AB:** How about headphones? You wear them on a couple of songs to hear a sequencer. Does that present any special problems?

**AVH:** As far as this whole concept of having sequenced music:



Sinatra's

# Gregg Field



By Robyn Flans

Photos by Aldo Mauro

**G**regg Field's resume includes work with some of the giants of American music's past—Harry James, Ray Charles, Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald. But this is one drummer who insists his focus is on the *here and now*.

Not that Field discounts his previous gigs as *passe*—in fact, he insists that his current gig with Frank Sinatra is the most fun he's ever had playing music. It's just that, because of the trend in the music industry to typecast players, many people don't get a chance to learn that Field is very much a part of the current scene.

For instance, Gregg prides himself on his funk, R&B, and pop drumming abilities. He's also taken the decidedly modern approach of making a statement on *both* sides of the control booth glass: He's been involved in pro-

ducing since the early '80s (his latest effort is keyboardist Billy Mitchell's album), and in fact has his own recording studio.

Gregg is certainly aware that his work with musical icons has amounted to an auspicious career. But, as he says, "I tried to create situations for myself that have *change* built into them." That sense of change keeps Gregg Field looking forward to the future and his next musical adventure.





**RF:** What do you think prepared you for the list of legends with whom you've worked?

**GF:** My parents loved jazz, and when I was a kid, they would take my brother and me to see people like Sammy Davis, Basie, Ella. I went to Disneyland and heard Basie's band for the first time when I was about ten. I remember being so overwhelmed by what I heard that I convinced my parents to buy all the Basie records they could find. I would go home and practice to them every day. I had some of Sonny Payne's and Harold Jones' cymbal patterns memorized! Harold Jones is such an amazing drummer. He's been one of my favorites since I heard the Basie band. He has a unique feel that creates such a strong rhythmic sense. I've never heard anybody get it to that level, and he does it effortlessly.

**RF:** Did you have any formal lessons?

**GF:** I played for about a year and then started to study with a real popular teacher in Oakland named Bill Nawrocki. I would take a half-hour lesson a week, and we worked on a lot of fundamental stuff. His forte was being able to handle playing in large ensembles, small groups, and shows. He wouldn't be the guy who would teach you to play in Miles Davis's band, but he could teach you how to handle a show. I studied with him for five or six years. Also, my elementary school had a concert band that met a couple of days a week. And my junior high school had a concert band and a jazz band that met every day.

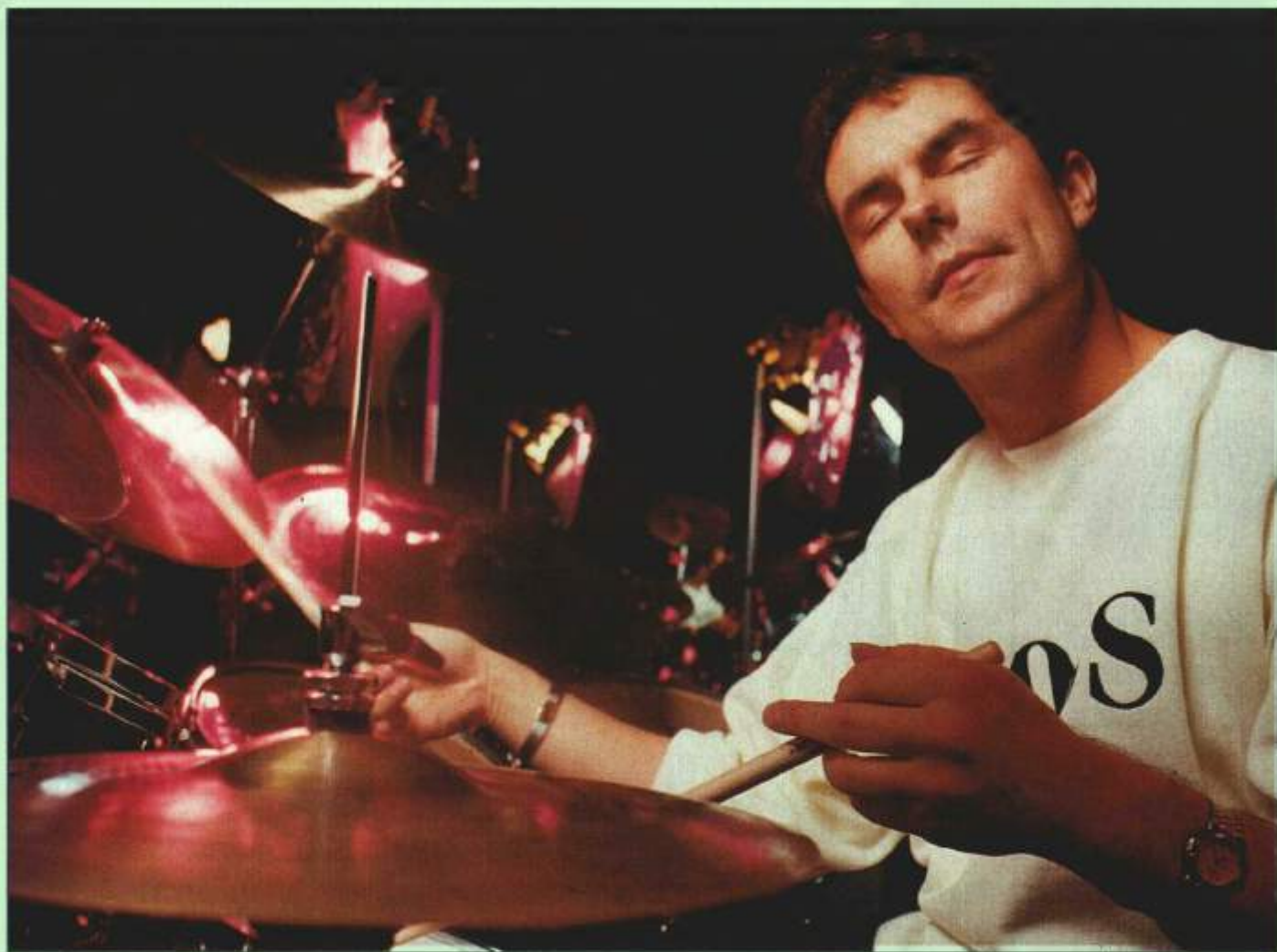
**RF:** So the focus was on jazz.

**GF:** It was on jazz, but I found that I was just as interested in R&B music, particularly what was coming out of Chicago at the time, like the stuff on Chess Records. I loved the way the

drummers sounded. Remember Maurice White as a *drummer*? I remember when he used to play in the Ramsey Lewis trio. He had a way of placing the backbeat. Harold Jones is from Chicago also. Chicago may or may not have anything to do with it, but there's a calmness and a controlled fire that I hear in both of their drumming. The way Maurice would play a backbeat was so perfect.

**RF:** What was your goal becoming by high school?

**GF:** I always wanted to play with Basie's band. That was music that inspired me more than anything else. This is a great story: I got in the band by an amazing bit of synchronicity. The band was playing in San Francisco. I was in high school at the time, and I had gone to hear them on a Saturday night at a place called the Circle Star. Basie was standing backstage, and I had



just been introduced to him. The whole band was on stage except Sonny Payne, who didn't realize that this particular show started an hour earlier than it had the rest of the week. Basie said, "Didn't I hear that you were a drummer?" "Yes," I said. "Do you want to play?" "Yes." So I actually went out and played the set. Basie made it real easy. He didn't play anything that would tax me too much, and I knew all the tunes I was playing, so I did okay.

**RF:** You must have been in heaven.

**GF:** I was on cloud nine. You couldn't talk to me for weeks. It was incredible. And when I went back to my high school band the next Monday, nobody believed I did it. Actually, one of the trumpet players had been there.

Sonny left about a year after that, and then they went through a few drummers. Butch Miles came out for six years, and then Duffy Jackson came out for about six months.

**RF:** What was your first big gig?

**GF:** I was hired to play with the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra when I was nineteen. I had just enrolled in college, and I got this call. It was too tempting, so I went on the road and did about a year with that band. It introduced me to touring and got me playing with better musicians than I had been playing with. I had no experience at all, though; I was a terrible drummer.

**RF:** Why do you say that?

**GF:** I just didn't have enough experience. I don't know too many nineteen-year-olds who can go out and do that.

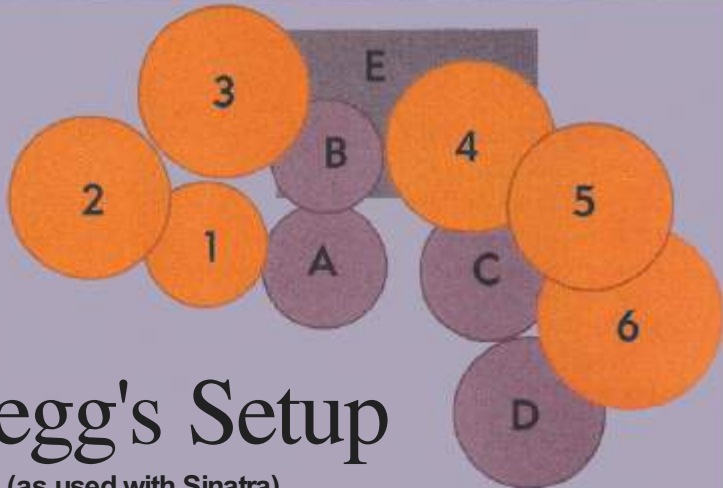
**RF:** So what was the lesson? How did you learn?

**GF:** By hearing the band work, seeing places where it didn't sound right to me and not knowing what to do about it.

**RF:** Was anybody saying anything?

**GF:** Oh, yeah. I was getting a hard time from the lead trumpet player, and it was, "Do this and do that." I was a kid. These were guys who were out having to work every night, and they didn't want to train some kid who was out of high school. But they hung in and I hung in and it got better. It was hard, though.

**RF:** So what did you do to learn the things you needed to learn?



## Gregg's Setup

(as used with Sinatra)

**Drumset:** Yamaha *Maple Custom* in ebony finish

- A. 5 1/2 x 14 aluminum snare drum
- B. 10 x 12 tom
- C. 13 x 15 tom
- D. 14 x 16 tom
- E. 16 x 22 bass drum

**Cymbals:** Zildjian

- 1. 13" K/Z hi-hat
- 2. 17" *Brilliant K* crash
- 3. 20" A crash with three rivets
- 4. 20" A mini-cup ride
- 5. 18" K thin crash
- 6. 22" A Custom China

**Hardware:** Yamaha 900 series, including hi-hat stand, double pedal (with felt beaters), and stand-mounted toms (as floor toms)

**Heads:** Remo *Legacy* on snare and front of bass drum, coated *Ambassadors* on tops of toms with clear *Ambassadors* on bottoms, *Powerstroke 3* on bass drum batter

**Sticks:** Vic Firth *SD-4* maple with wood tip

**Electronics:** Alesis *D-4*, Roland *R8*, Roland *Octapad*, Mackie *1604* mixer, Yamaha *DMP7* mixer, Lexicon *LXP-1* and *LXP-5*

**GF:** I wasn't willing to accept the limitations that I had. In other words, I thought I should be farther along. You want to be doing it all. At nineteen, I wanted to be playing as well as whoever my favorite drummer was at that time, but their experiences were different than mine. I learned this lesson a few times: Find out what your limitations are, and be willing to work on them—rather than burying your head in the sand like an ostrich, hoping they'll go away.

In learning where I was falling short, I had to take the bull by the horns and practice and get the experience I needed. It seems like every job I was hired on would be a job that would always challenge me. I would have just enough ability to get the gig, and then it would

be quantum-leap growth every time I'd get it, because the guys would be pulling me along, saying, "Do this and do that...."

**RF:** Can you give an example?

**GF:** I joined the Ray Charles band in 1977.

**RF:** Is he as hard to work with as many say?

**GF:** He's tough. I really love Ray. He's pretty misunderstood, but he can be brutal on rhythm section players, and I was no exception. It's funny. He would be brutal on the bandstand, and you'd freeze. Then the manager would come up and say, "Mr. Charles would like to talk to you." You'd be nervous as hell as you'd walk into the dressing room, but he'd be the sweetest guy in the world. He was very articulate about what he



wanted. That was the big challenge of that job. Ray knew exactly what he wanted to hear.

**RF:** Meaning?

**GF:** Specific fills. He would play your cymbals and tell you which cymbal he'd like to hear behind which things, and he'd expect you to write it in and play it. One of the most challenging things for me—something that prepared me for work later—was that I had to play things the same way every night for him. At that age, I thought, "I have to create my style; I have to be me and put my stamp on it." What kind of stamp are you going to have at twenty-one? Through intimidation and a bunch of other things, he really pulled me together. In that way, it helped a lot.

In another way, though, my year with Ray almost did me more harm than good. If you've seen Ray, you know that he rocks from left to right. They set the drummer up so he can see Ray's left foot, and depending on how Ray drops that foot, that indicates the beats you're supposed to play. Rather than develop your own sense of rhythmic pulse, you end up slaving to Ray's pulse, and sometimes he'll feel like speeding it up or slowing it down. If I had been there too long, it would have been damaging, I think. But I guess I got what I needed to get from that genre, and I moved on.

**RF:** So having to play the same thing was good discipline. How did that help?

**GF:** I stopped hearing just the drums and started to hear the band as a *whole*. I became aware of the impact that the drums were having on the whole band's sound. That's one thing that was a problem for me. I was so concerned with trying to get my own sound together—trying to be an exciting drummer and play something that was interesting—that I was really not aware of the impact I was having on the overall picture. By my having to play the same thing every night, I began to see how it worked—*simplicity*.

I came back to L.A. and I wanted to do sessions. I fell a little away from the jazz focus because I was starting to have success doing some sessions. I did Donald Byrd, the Emotions, the Whispers, and people like that. I had to learn to work with a click track, so it

"I was somewhat of a Sinatra fan when I got the gig, but I've become a much bigger fan since I've been with him. His time is impeccable."

was another case of my having just enough ability to get by. I didn't know how to tune the drums for the studio, and I was afraid to ask.

**RF:** What did you do?

**GF:** I got replaced on my first session, that's what I did. It was terrible. But it was a great experience when I look back on it; I'm glad it happened. It was a session with Gregg Phillanganes, Eddie Watkins, Wah-Wah Watson, and me. I had never worked with a click track, and I had never had my drums in a studio. I was twenty-two years old, and here were these big session musicians, so I didn't want to ask somebody to show me how to tune the drums. We played about two minutes and I saw heads looking at each other. I was thinking, "Oh man, I know where this

is going." Fortunately, Eddie Watkins and Wah-Wah worked with me and taught me how to play with a click track. They had actually called me for the sessions, and I remember one time Eddie said, "Why don't you get there a couple of hours early, and I'll work with you." It was invaluable.

**RF:** Why did he do that?

**GF:** I hadn't seen Eddie in ten years, but recently we hooked up again, and I asked him why he did that. He said he thought I had talent and that he could help. When I look back on it, that was really a selfless thing to do. Then I talked to other drummers about tuning, and bit by bit, I became less afraid to ask somebody. There were no drum machines then, so when anybody wanted to do a demo, they needed a live

## Field Trip

Here are the albums Gregg Field says best represent his drumming...

Artist	Album Title
Frank Wess/Sweets Edison	Dear Mr. Basie
Frank Sinatra	The Reprise Collection, Vol. III
Count Basie	Warm Breeze
Ray Charles	Ain't It So
Count Basie	The Best Of The Count Basie Big Band
Count Basie	Farmers Market Barbecue

...and here are the albums he says he listens to most for inspiration.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Herbie Hancock	Headhunters	Harvey Mason
Sarah Vaughan	Send In The Clowns	Harold Jones
Diana Ross	Lady Sings The Blues	Earl Palmer
Herbie Hancock	Herbie Hancock Quartet	Tony Williams
	Live In Tokyo	
Luther Vandross	Best Of	Yogi Horton
Count Basie	Compact Jazz Series	Sonny Payne
Woody Herman	Giant Steps	Ed Soph
Frank Sinatra	Sinatra—Basie	Sonny Payne

drummer, and there was a lot of recording work being done. Then in '78, Harry James called and I did about a year and a half with him.

**RF:** Any valuable lessons on that gig?

**GF:** Yes, but not drumming-wise. Harry was sort of an unhappy guy. He didn't have much communication with his band at all. I always felt that if I was going to work with somebody, I should be friends with them. Little did I know. Ray Charles was a very nice man, but you don't hang out with Ray. Harry kept to himself and he would never suggest what to play. He'd just look at you disgruntled if he didn't like what you did. He was an unhappy guy who had had all this success, and I found that intriguing. What I was learning at the time was that because he wasn't communicating with his orchestra, there was no sense of camaraderie or musical *group* playing on the band. It was like a band...with this guy standing in front playing. It was separate.

Basie's band was an entirely different matter. That's when I really saw the contrast with Harry. Basie's band was like a family. Everybody was close. Basie was the most interesting man I've ever met. He had that feeling of being an old soul. He was a very calm man; during the three years I spent with him on the road, nothing ruffled his feathers. There was no feeling of, "I'm the star," even though he was this *giant*. I remember President Reagan coming up to him, timidly tapping him on the shoulder, and being real polite. I saw Sinatra and Leonard Bernstein both do the same thing, and he treated everybody the same. In that band I learned as much about being a human being as I did about playing. He was really a special man. I miss him a lot.

**RF:** You've told me before that there was a certain way to play a Basie tune.

**GF:** There's a style that's characteristic of Basie. It's a sense of a very definite four-beat pulse. It's almost as though the four-beat

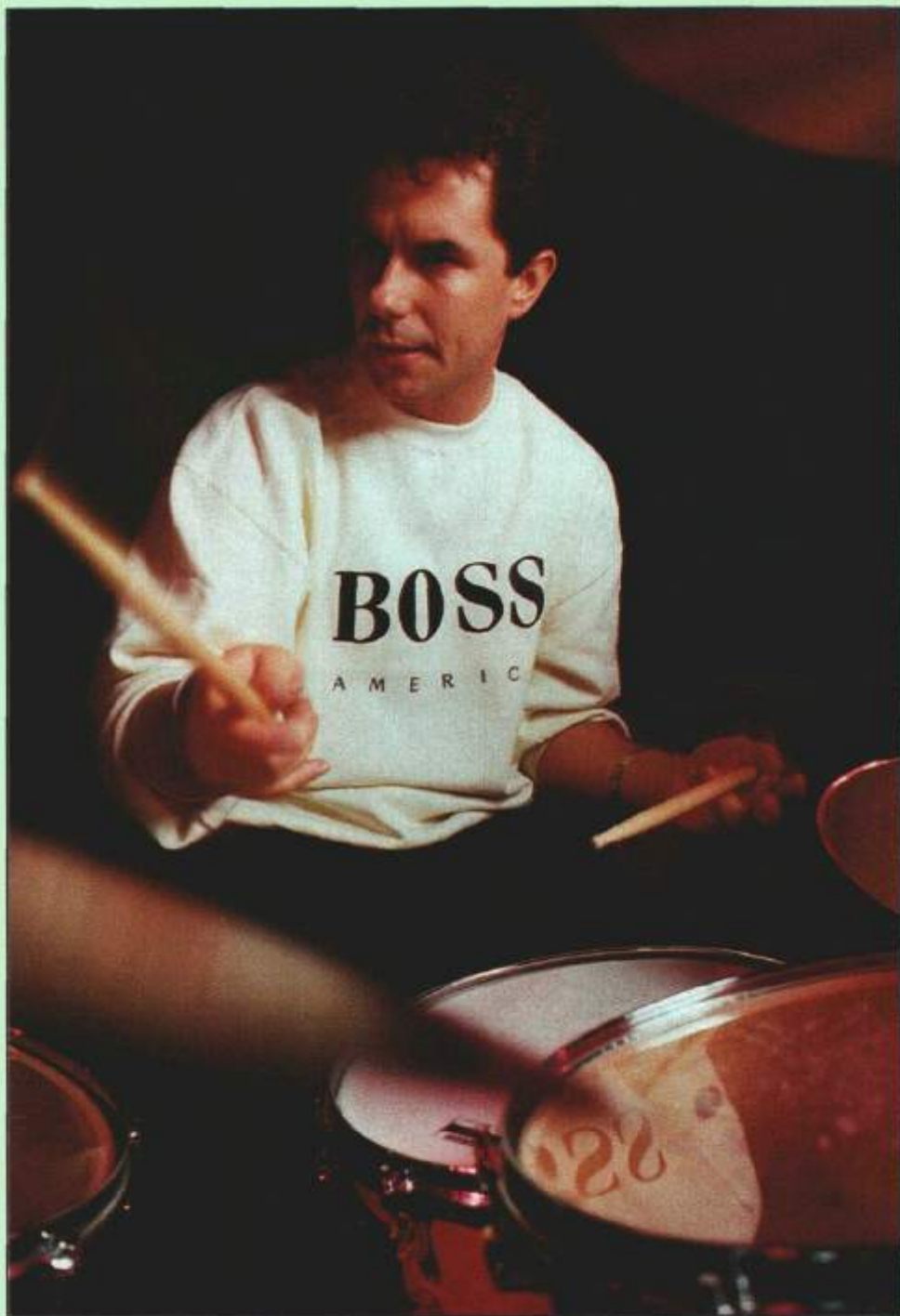
pulse is like a river that flows. Leaves drop and flow with the river at the same speed, but they don't impede the flow of the river. It's not like a stone dropping and the water rippling. The river flows with a very even sense of power. That's the rhythm section. Then the brass or reeds that play on top of it, the soloists, are in rhythmic accordance with the pulse that the band is playing. The art of doing that band correctly, in my opinion—which was also what

Harold Jones did—was creating a strong sense of this 4/4 rhythmic pulse. It's the same kind of thing that you're doing when you're playing R&B and rock 'n' roll, where there is this strong rhythmic pulse. It's allowing that momentous force to happen, and then having things build on top of that.

**RF:** What did you learn on the Basie gig?

**GF:** When you're in high school and college, and you're playing drums in a

*continued on page 78*





# MD's '93 READERS

## HONOR ROLL

MD's Honor Roll consists of those drummers whose talent, musical achievements, and lasting popularity placed them first in MD's Readers Poll in the categories indicated for five or more years. We will include these artists, along with those added in the future, in each year's Readers Poll Results as our way of honoring these very special performers.

**ALEX ACUÑA**

Latin/Brazilian Percussion

**AIRTO**

Latin American and  
Latin/Brazilian Percussion

**GARY BURTON**

Mallet Percussion

**ANTHONY J. CIRONE**

Classical Percussion

**PHIL COLLINS**

Pop/Mainstream Rock

**VIC FIRTH**

Classical Percussion

**STEVE GADD**

Ail-Around; Studio

**DAVID GARIBALDI**

R&B/Funk

**LARRIE LONDIN**

Country

**ROD MORGENSTEIN**

Rock/Progressive Rock

**NEIL PEART**

Rock; Multi-Percussion

**BUDDY RICH**

Big Band

**ED SHAUGHNESSY**

Big Band

**STEVE SMITH**

All-Around

**DAVE WECKL**

Electric Jazz

**TONY WILLIAMS**

Jazz/Mainstream Jazz

## HALL OF FAME

**1993: JEFF PORCARO**



**1992: Max Roach**

**1991: Art Blakey**

**1990: Bill Bruford**

**1989: Carl Palmer**

**1988: Joe Morello**

**1987: Billy Cobham**

**1986: Tony Williams**

**1985: Louie Bellson**

**1984: Steve Gadd**

**1983: Neil Peart**

**1982: Keith Moon**

**1981: John Bonham**

**1980: Buddy Rich**

**1979: Gene Krupa**

# POLL RESULTS



## ALL-AROUND

## STUDIO

## ELECTRIC JAZZ

## FUNK

### VINNIE COLAIUTA

2. Rod Morgenstein
3. Gregg Bissonette
4. Anton Fig
5. Kenny Aronoff/  
Omar Hakim

### VINNIE COLAIUTA

2. Jim Keltner
3. Kenny Aronoff
4. Harvey Mason/  
Simon Phillips

### DENNIS CHAMBERS

2. Steve Smith
3. William Kennedy
4. Harvey Mason
5. Bill Bruford

### DENNIS CHAMBERS

2. Chuck Morris
3. Chad Smith
4. Russ McKinnon
5. William Calhoun



## MAINSTREAM JAZZ

### JEFF WATTS

2. Peter Erskine
3. Marvin "Smitty" Smith
4. Dave Weckl
5. Jack DeJohnette

## BIG BAND

### LOUIE BELLSON

2. Shannon Powell
3. Danny Gottlieb
4. Butch Miles
5. Dave Weckl

## POP/MAINSTREAM ROCK

### KENNY ARONOFF

2. Chester Thompson
3. Manu Katche
4. Blas Elias
5. Larry Mullen, Jr.





## HARD ROCK/ METAL

### LARS ULRICH

2. Alex Van Halen
3. Vinnie Paul
4. Dave Lombardo
5. Scott Rockenfield



## PROGRESSIVE ROCK

### WILLIAM CALHOUN

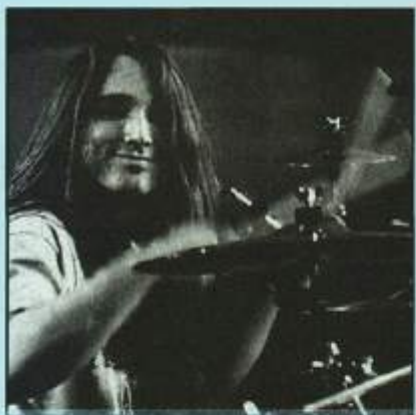
2. Stephen Perkins
3. Terry Bozzio
4. Tim "Herb" Alexander
5. Dave Abbruzzese



## COUNTRY

### EDDIE BAYERS

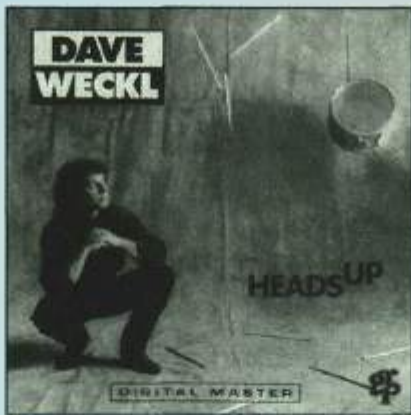
2. Fred Young
3. Milton Sledge
4. Jeff Hale
5. Tommy Wells



## UP & COMING

### DAVE ABBRUZZESE (Pearl Jam)

2. Mike Portnoy  
(Dream Theater)
3. Sean Kinney  
(Alice In Chains)
4. Aaron Comess  
(Spin Doctors)
5. Steve Gorman  
(Black Crowes)



## RECORDED PERFORMANCE

### DAVE WECKL *Heads Up*

2. Rod Morgenstein  
Dixie Dregs: *Bring 'Em Back Alive*
3. Sean Kinney  
Alice In Chains: *Dirt*
4. Mike Portnoy  
Dream Theater: *Images And Words*
5. Nick Menza  
Megadeth: *Countdown  
To Extinction*



## LATIN/BRAZILIAN PERCUSSION

### TITO PUENTE

2. Luis Conte
3. Joey Heredia/  
Richie "Gajate" Garcia
5. Walfredo Reyes, Sr.

In order to present the results of our Readers Poll, the votes were tabulated and the top five names in each category listed here. In the event a tie occurred at any position other than fifth place, all names in that position were presented and the subsequent position eliminated. When a tie occurred at fifth place, all winning names were presented.

## EDITORS' ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This award is given by the editors of *Modern Drummer* in recognition of outstanding contribution to the drum/percussion community by a performer, author, educator, manufacturer, etc. The persons so honored may be notable figures in drumming history or active participants on today's drumming scene. The criteria for this award shall be the value of the contribution(s) made by the honorees, in terms of influence on subsequent musical styles, educational methods, product designs, etc. There will be no limit as to the number of honorees that may be designated each year.

For 1993, MD's editors are pleased to honor:

### WARREN "BABY" DODDS



Warren "Baby" Dodds is universally recognized as the world's first great jazz drummer. The most influential drummer of the 1920s, Dodds performed in the saloons of New Orleans, on Mississippi riverboats, and on the hot jazz

scene of Chicago, with such artists as King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, and Sidney Bechet. Embodying the spirit and tradition of early military-flavored jazz, he was also the first jazz drummer to make the rhythmic undercurrent of the bass drum the foundation of the band. Dodds also is credited with being one of the first drummers to play breaks and fills between phrases and solos—marking the beginning of the drum solo itself.

### PHILLY JOE JONES



Philly Joe Jones is considered by many to be one of the most important drummers in jazz. As an integral member of the Miles Davis quintet in the mid-1950s, Jones was revered by jazz fans and drummers alike. His solid drive, master-

ful brushwork, and melodically inventive solos influenced an entire generation of drummers. His emotionally charged playing was the perfect link between the early bop styles of Kenny Clarke, Max Roach, and Art Blakey, and the freer, more driving styles of Elvin Jones and Tony Williams that came later. Late in his career he combined his innovative playing with teaching, and remained active in both areas until his passing in 1985.

### GARY CHESTER



Gary Chester had one of the busiest studio careers of any musician in the 1950s and '60s, recording hundreds of hit singles on the New York studio scene. He gave up the grind of studio work in the 1970s to concentrate on teaching. His

innovative and demanding technical concepts contributed to the development of such artists as Dave Weckl, Kenny Aronoff, and Danny Gottlieb—among hundreds of other students. His method book, *The New Breed*, was first published by Modern Drummer Publications in 1985, and has remained a top seller ever since. Upon his passing in 1987, Gary was widely regarded as one of the most creative and influential teachers in drumming.

### MARION "CHICK" EVANS



One of the founding partners of the Evans Products Company, Chick Evans is credited with being the first person to put a plastic drum-head into commercial production. A working drummer in the 1940s and '50s, Evans was

dissatisfied with the inconsistencies of calf heads, and eventually hit upon DuPont *Mylar* as an alternative. Though crude by modern standards, the *Mylar* heads that Evans tacked onto wooden hoops in the 1950s ultimately led to the complete revolutionizing of the drum industry.



# Yamaha

## Maple Custom Drumkit

### With YESS System

■ by Rick Van Horn

**Innovation, quality, and musicality—Yamaha has a top-flight contender here.**

It was only three years ago that Yamaha introduced their original *Maple Custom* series, which *MD* reviewed in November of 1991. But in January of '93 the kit was reissued with a totally new mounting system for the rack and floor toms. Yamaha believed that the new system made enough difference in the sound of the kit to warrant a second examination. After working with the kit at length, I have to concur. This is a totally new animal.

Our test kit consisted of 8x8, 10x10, 10x12, and 12x14 rack toms (all mounted on floor stands), a 16x16 floor tom, an 16x22 bass drum, and a 6½x14 snare drum. The toms and bass drum were finished in solid black; the snare drum was finished in black maple—a lighter finish that revealed the wood grain. Basic hardware came from Yamaha's 800 series, including straight and boom cymbal stands, a snare stand, the 830 hi-hat, and the 810 bass drum pedal. Two double tom stands from the larger 900 series completed the package.

#### The YESS System

Essentially, the reason for this second review of the *Maple Custom* kit is the difference in its sound created by the new YESS (Yamaha Enhanced Sustain System) mounting system. According to the company's ads, this system is designed to do two things: maximize the resonance and sustain of the drums, and provide stable mounting—with no movement of the drums. In order to achieve this, Yamaha has come up with a design that is a compromise between a standard shell-mount tom holder and a totally isolated suspension system.

The YESS system starts by taking the tom mounting bracket off of the drum shell. A pair of small steel bars are attached at

their lower ends to the top two bolts of the bracket. At the upper ends of these bars, two bolts pass through steel spacers and ultimately through the drumshell—at the same level on the shell at which the upper lugs are mounted. This is the "acoustic node" of the shell, and it has been proven that hardware mounted at this point creates less interference with a drum's resonance and sustain than hardware mounted elsewhere. It is this nodal-point mounting—coupled with the smaller amount of hardware actually affixed to the shells—that allows the YESS system to enhance the sustain of the *Maple Custom* drums.

As for stability: The mounts are still attached directly to the shell—albeit at a different place and by fewer bolts than usual. Thus the drum is not completely free to bounce around when struck, as drums can sometimes do when mounted in total suspension systems. Additionally, the drums can be placed closer together than can drums with suspension systems. (The difference is only a matter of an inch or so, but some drummers do find that one-inch separation bothersome.)

Specially shortened versions of Yamaha's familiar hex-rod tom arms are used with the YESS system. And since there are no holes in the drumshells (where the arms would normally pass through), Yamaha has thoughtfully fitted each drum with a little felt pad glued onto the shell, to prevent the tom arms from poking and marring the shell if the drum is pushed on too far.

Since the period allowed for a product review is fairly brief, one can only speculate on a product's long-term performance. But I must say that I have some doubts about the durability of the YESS mounts on larger rack toms, such as the 12x14 on our test kit. The standard Yamaha mount is affixed to a drumshell reasonably near its center of gravity, and by means of four bolts in a square pattern. With the YESS system and its mounting point near the top of the drum, there's a lot of downward torque against only two bolts. My concern is that those bolts might be prone to bending (or even snapping) over time and repeated impact. I'm not saying that they *will*—only that the possibility exists. Only time will tell.

Although the floor tom leg mounts are designed to be similar in appearance to the rack tom mounts, they really aren't any more "isolated" or "suspended" than are normal floor tom leg brackets. They are affixed to the shell with two bolts—as are many other types of floor-tom leg brackets. However, the point at which they are mounted is quite different. They, too, are mounted at a nodal point—this time at the same level as the *bottom* lugs. This mounting position does have an affect on the sound of the drum, as we'll soon see.

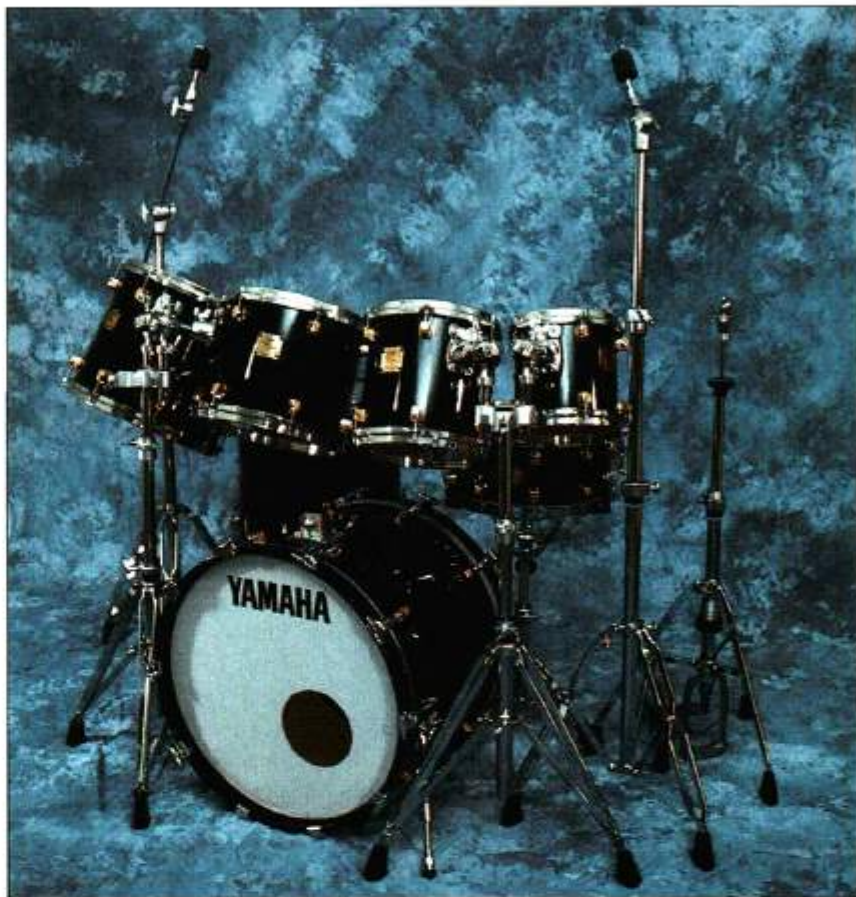
#### Sound

It doesn't matter how imaginative, thoughtfully designed, or innovative the YESS system is if it doesn't do what its name implies: enhance the drum's sustain. Ahh—but it does! I can say without hesitation that this was the liveliest, most resonant, and most musical Yamaha drumkit I've ever played. All of the

toms were fitted with Evans single-ply clear *Genera* batter and *Resonant* bottom heads, and they just *sang!* The floor tom especially rang out for a tremendously long time when struck. And the sustain was more than long; it was *musical*. The tone continued to be full, round, and warm, right up to the end of the long decay.

Obviously, not every drumming application calls for drums that "ring for days." But the beauty of this kit was that the drums provided so much "headroom" to work with. I actually had to muffle them down a bit for my first sets, then open them up for the later, louder sets. (I was especially impressed by how well the toms sounded when miked up only through a couple of overheads.) The drums performed marvelously under all circumstances. I was pleased by the full, punchy sound that came back at me from behind the kit, and by the depth, tonality, and "bigness" that projected to the front.

The design of the *Maple Custom* bass drum was not affected by the introduction of the YESS system (other than the fact that the toms on our test kit were all stand-mounted and the bass drum was free of other drums). But I should comment that it sounded terrific. It was fitted with an Evans *Genera EQ-3* batter head and a standard, single-ply Yamaha logo head on the front. I think that part of the bass drum's excellent sound—right out of the box, I might add—is the fact that the



hole in the head was much smaller than on other Yamaha bass drums I've seen, and offset rather than in the center. This allowed much more of the sound to develop within the drum—thus maximizing its depth and tone. The *EQ-3* batter head gave plenty of anti-ring control for live playing, and a small pillow was all that was necessary for miking purposes.

The snare drum was Yamaha's standard *Maple Custom* model. I've had trouble with 6½"-deep snare drums in the past; they can sometimes sound a bit "tubby," and can be difficult to tune up high without sounding choked. Not so with this baby. I was able to get an effective tuning range from a nice, deep, wet, "fatback" sound to a very respectable, cutting *crack*. Snare sensitivity was excellent throughout. The snare strainer featured tension adjustments at both ends, and the throw-off worked smoothly and comfortably.

### Looks

Our test kit was finished in a very lustrous solid black lacquer. The brass finish on the low-





mass lugs added a striking accent, and the overall look of the kit was both classy and attractive. Other finishes available in this series are natural maple, black maple, and turquoise maple (all of which let the grain show through). I was a bit surprised to learn that the only finishes available for snare drums are the natural maple or the black maple. While the black maple finish on our test snare looked fine in its own right, I think it would be a nice touch to have snares available to match the rest of the drums.

I also found it a bit unusual to see a white logo head on the kit. A Yamaha spokesperson told me that this was a deliberate statement on Yamaha's part—a desire to be a little different from what has become the norm. The Yamaha logo—normally rather large and blocky—has also been reduced in size for this reason. It's certainly still prominent, but is perhaps a bit less billboard-like than others of its ilk.

### Hardware

Yamaha's 800 series hardware is big, heavy-duty stuff. The 900 series is even bigger, with very long, straight double-braced legs for extra stability. All of the cymbal and tom stands that accompanied our test kit worked very well in terms of positioning flexibility and sturdiness. Of course, they were heavy to carry around, but that comes with the territory with hardware in this size and strength range. Yamaha does make excellent lighter-duty hardware, which I suppose one could order as an alternative.

I found the *HS-830* hi-hat smooth and comfortable to use. The spring tension is adjusted by a lift-and-twist cylinder, with five incremental steps. There's no option for in-between positions, but most drummers would probably be happy with one of the five provided. The *FP-810* bass drum pedal is lightweight and compact, and has a quick, smooth, and sure action. It's available with a baseplate for heavier-duty use, but I found the

standard model more than strong enough for my needs.

### Pet Peeves

Lest I make it sound like everything with this kit was perfect, I want to point out that two things weren't (not only with this kit, but with every pro-level Yamaha kit I've come in contact with). For some reason, Yamaha bass drum hoops are exceptionally thick, and some excellent bass drum pedals on the market simply will not fit onto them. Even this might not be as aggravating, were it not for the fact that one can't even take advantage of the variety of unique bass drum beaters on the market, because they won't fit into a Yamaha pedal—the shaft hole is too small. It seems as though Yamaha is saying that if you play a Yamaha bass drum, you have to use a Yamaha pedal and beater as well. I think this position bears some examination, since we drummers are a cantankerous and individualistic lot, and we like to make such choices for ourselves.

### Conclusion

Now that I've got that off my chest, I can safely say that the *Maple Custom* kit, fitted with the YESS mounting system, is far and away the best-sounding, most responsive Yamaha kit I've ever played. Its construction, finish, and acoustic quality put it firmly in the league of the best maple drumkits on the market. Not surprisingly, the *Maple Custom* is now Yamaha's top-of-the-line series, and it carries a price tag that corresponds to its level of quality. The suggested retail price for our test kit is \$5,850.

### MD's Sound System

For the purpose of product reviews involving drum and/or cymbal miking, MD employs the following equipment: Shure SM98, SM91, and SM57 microphones, Zildjian ZMC-/O Cymbal Microphone System, Seck 122 12-channel stereo mixer, Shure M268 mixers (2), JBL/UREI 6260 power amplifier, JBL 46028 Cabaret Series monitor speakers (2).

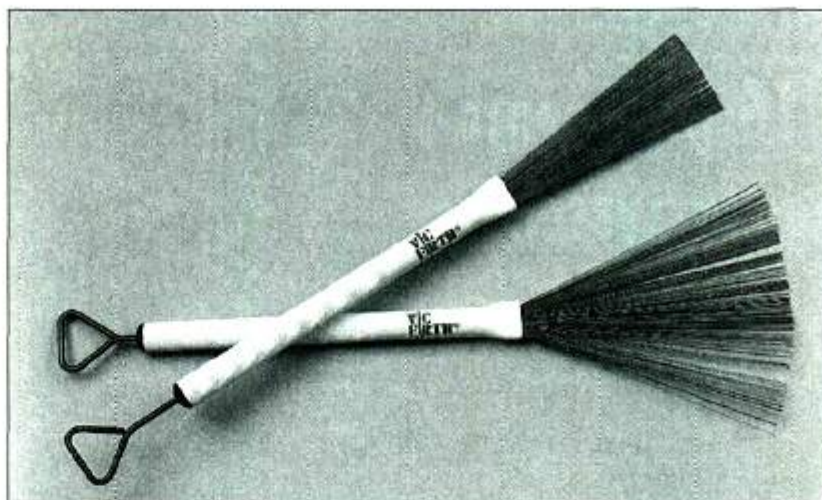
## New Brushes From Calato and Firth

■ by Rick Mattingly

Brush playing is often referred to as a "lost art," but given the variety of wire brushes currently on the market, *somebody* must be using them. Recently, Calato added a new model to their already distinguished line, while Vic Firth introduced his first model of the traditional wire brush.

The new Calato brush bears the signature of Clayton Cameron, the young brush virtuoso whose clinics and DCI video have done a lot to rekindle interest in brush playing. His design features rubber handles with a nylon cap at the end, which can be used to simulate a stick sound if you suddenly need to play an accent, a tom fill, or even a cross-stick sound. There is also a rounded stainless-steel rivet at the very end designed for cymbal scrapes.

The brushes themselves are not retractable, nor is the spread of the brush adjustable. But most players should find the three-inch spread quite acceptable. For comparison, it's the same spread as the middle notch on the adjustable Calato model that has three notches in its handle. Ordinarily I would worry about tossing non-retractable brushes into a trap case or even putting them in a stick bag, but Calato packages the *Clayton Cameron Drumbrush* in a cardboard tube that should offer plenty of protection between gigs.



The new Vic Firth *Jazz Brushes* come packaged in a similar tube, but these brushes are fully retractable. When you first try to extend the brushes into playing position, you'll find that there is quite a bit of resistance—but that is by design. A rubber washer keeps the metal shaft from slipping too easily

through the handle, permitting the player to select any desired spread without worrying about the handle slipping and allowing the change to spread. Fully extended, the Firth brush has a spread of nearly five inches.

In some of the first models, the rubber plug could come out, but that problem has been corrected. Should anyone encounter one of those early pairs, send the defective brushes back to Firth and they will be replaced.

Overall, the Firth brushes can be described as heavy-duty, since the handles are made of high-impact plastic to allow for rimshots, and even the individual wire strands are thicker than most. They don't seem as prone to bending as are most brush wires, and you can use these brushes on a head with extreme texture (such as a Remo *Legacy*) without the strands getting caught in the rough spots on the surface. They also produce a slightly sharper sound on cymbals.

These brushes are also heavier than the norm, feeling much like a medium-weight drumstick. Drummers who do most of their playing with sticks might appreciate the solid feel of the Firth brushes.

Both of these models are of extremely high quality. Considering their different attributes, either or both might be worthy additions to your stick bag. The Calato *Clayton Cameron Drumbrushes* list for \$20.95; the Vic Firth *Jazz Brushes* retail for \$19.95.



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# Midi-Cyms CP-16 Electronic Trigger System

by Paul M. Van Patten

**Interface, drum pads, cymbal triggers.... It's all here—and it works great!**

The *CP-16* from Midi-Cyms is an electronic percussion triggering system that boasts many new and innovative features. The system is comprised of the rack-mountable *CP-16* MIDI interface unit and any combination of drum, cymbal, and hi-hat "pads." The system does not employ an internal tone source, so it must be used in conjunction with any MIDI-based sound module.

The *CP-16* system can function similarly to other MIDI trigger/pad systems on the market. However, it is Midi-Cyms' cymbal and hi-hat "pads" that make this system so special. (From this point on, I will simply refer to them as "cymbals" and "hi-hats.") Before digging into their individual capabilities, let's take a tour of the *CP-16* interface unit.

## CP-16 Trigger Interface

The *CP-16* controller/interface occupies a single space of a conventional 19" audio rack. The unit is quite powerful, with a wide range of MIDI-signal processing capabilities, and it offers the user flexibility, versatility, and ease of use. Since it utilizes "open-architecture" software, the *CP-16* will never become obsolete in the ever-changing world of MIDI. For example, during the relatively short period of time that I had the unit for evaluation, there was not only a software revision/update (no charge to the user), but other upgraded modifications and options as well. I must add that the manual, documentation, and toll-free technical support are excellent. This leaves a very positive image in my mind regarding the company's vision behind their instrument.

The *CP-16* sports only six buttons on the front panel. They are: "select," "enter," "left arrow," "right arrow," "+/increment," and "-/decrement." Also found here are the power button and an easy-to-read eight-digit alpha numeric L.E.D. display. On the rear panel are the MIDI-In/Out and Thru ports, a

single 1/4" phone jack input for auxiliary hi-hat switching functions, eight 1/4" trigger inputs, and eight 1/4" "choke circuit" inputs. Since the choke circuitry inside the *CP-16* is one of the system's main features, we'll cover it in more detail later.

The *CP-16* interface unit gives the player/programmer full control over a wide range of performance parameters, which are accessed via a software menu/sub-menu system. These parameters include: MIDI note number, MIDI channel number, velocity curve, velocity type (layer or switch), and pitch bend by velocity.

The sub-menu parameters that control the functionality of the cymbals and hi-hats are: "choke-circuit" (trigger correlation, choke-off delay, and send note off/on), "hi-hat" (off/on trigger assignment, hi-hat mask, velocity, and delay), and "hi-hat closed-to-open."

On the global level are a set of menus covering: "program select," "program save," "level/auto-sense learning," "calibration," "system re-initialization," and "system exclusive information." The *CP-16* comes with default kits preset at the factory for most of the major manufacturers (such as Roland, E-mu, and Alesis). This will be of interest to those who want to "plug in and play," as opposed to learning how to program the unit first. However, you may modify any of these pre-programmed kits, and store your edited versions in any of the eighteen kit locations. It would be impossible to fully cover in detail each of the parameters found within all of the various menus, so I'll give you a generalized overview.

Upon powering the *CP-16* up to its initial editing screen, you may cycle through the following eight menus: "hi-hat," "level," "calibrate," "program," "presets," "sys-ex information," "trigger input," and "choke input." As previously mentioned, you may use the *CP-16* with any combination of pads, cymbals, or hi-hats. However, trigger inputs 1, 2, and 3 are set up from the factory as default settings for the hi-hats.

Each trigger input has the capability of processing from one to four "slots" (or MIDI notes) simultaneously. Each slot can process individual settings for MIDI note number, MIDI channel number, velocity curve, and velocity type. There are two options for velocity type that alter the way the slots interact: "Layer" simply layers together all of the information that you program into each of the four slots. If you select "switch," low and high sub-menus are displayed. These allow you to program velocity switch point values between each slot used.

Pitch bend has three sub-menus: rate/range, ratio, and mask. The "rate/range" parameters set the four-point envelope curve of the "pitch bend by velocity" feature. This allows you to process and filter trigger data through the curves you have set up. "Range" sets the amount of bend applied to your tone source, while "rate" affects how quickly the pitch bend occurs.

The "ratio" parameter gives you seven variations of the currently programmed curve. These variations give a percentage amount of the original curve value, and include: 1-1 (100%), 1-2 (50%), 1-3 (33%), 1-4 (25%), 2-1 (200%), 3-1 (300%), and 4-1

(400%). You also have the capability of programming in individual custom curves per trigger. The final parameter is "pitch-bend mask." This offers the capability to determine which slot or slots will be affected by the pitch bend effect.

The "choke" menu controls the choking abilities of the *CP-16*. These parameters are: trigger select, note number, channel, channel number, delay, and velocity. This choke-circuit technology is the most innovative feature of the *CP-16* system. Players can choke off a triggered sound at will (for example, a cymbal crash), furthering their expressive control. However, this feature can only be used if the drum machine or tone source will accept note-off commands, and that note-off receive must be enabled either globally or per voice.

Another feature available via this choke circuitry is the "choke note on" command. This allows you to send an immediate or delayed trigger-on command, which can delay or shorten a note's full duration after you have choked a note. You have control over note number, channel number, delay time, and velocity level. With these two features, a whole new dimension can be added to one's performance. With a little experimentation, some very interesting effects can be obtained.

### The Hi-hats

The main hi-hat menu allows you to choose what trigger inputs will be used for the Midi-Cyms hi-hat trigger pads. Inputs 1, 2, and 3 are the factory default settings, however, you may also use any of the other trigger inputs as well. Available are four trigger outputs from the pads themselves, which are traditionally set up as: trigger 1 for the top hat, 2 for the bottom, 3 for the top hat's bell, and 4 for a choke circuit output.

Level and decay are the two primary parameters that control the way in which the hi-hat pad triggers interact. Though it took a while for me to tweak these parameters back and forth to adjust their response to my satisfaction, this adjustment process



did yield a very realistic playing response and feel.

The main level menu represents the "auto-sense-learning" portion of the *CP-16*. This menu will automatically cycle through each of the trigger inputs asking for low and high velocity hits from the user. This function allows you to easily input your playing dynamics per trigger, as well as "training" them to eliminate false triggering. It also saves you considerable time in inputting this type of data (as opposed to manually entering it in). However, you still may opt to enter it in step-by-step, by using the "calibrate" parameter found within the sub-menu system.

### Note Tracking

The *CP-16* offers total voice polyphony via use of its unique "note tracking" feature. Here you have the option of programming in delayed note-off commands, ranging from 0 to 25.5 seconds in duration, from the time of receiving a trigger-on command. Many pad interfaces send consecutive note-off com-



mands immediately after being triggered on, creating the infamous machine-gun effect. By giving you control over note-off commands, you can achieve a much more fluid and realistic performance. This can be particularly effective within the studio environment.

### The Cymbals

I received 12", 16", and 18" cymbal pads and a pair of 12" hi-hats for this review. The cymbals are constructed of 1/4"-thick black plastic, with center holes cut for use with any traditional cymbal stand. The bottom of each cymbal is made of lightweight aluminum, which is where the trigger output circuitry is mounted. There are two models available for the conventional cymbal pads: The *MCC* model utilizes a single trigger output, with choke circuitry as well. This model is intended for use as a crash cymbal, hence the choke circuitry. The *RCC* model comes with two triggers and is made for use as a ride cymbal. The first trigger is located under the traditional playing area, while the second trigger is located within the bell portion.

The 12" hi-hats mount easily on conventional hi-hat stands, with different bottom hat seat adapters available to accommodate various hi-hat pull-rod diameters. There are a total of three trigger outputs for the hi-hats: The first is in the bottom hat, the second is in the top, and the third is located in the bell of the top. All of these triggers have a 28" cable with a 1/4" female input jack per-

manently attached. A fourth 1/4" jack is also attached, and is used for a choke-circuit output. This test pair came outfitted with a black, gum-rubber playing surface glued to the top hi-hat, intended to give the player a much more realistic feel than the hard plastic surface. This rubber surface is included on the ride and crash cymbals as well.

I'll admit that playing on these cymbals felt a bit unusual at first—but after a short while I thoroughly enjoyed them. The playing feel of the rubber pad yields a dramatic improvement over the stiff, hard feel of the bare plastic. They remind me of the feel that I'm used to from my *drumKAT* controller, while giving an excellent range of dynamic response. And how does the choke circuitry work? Flawlessly.

I used the system in a variety of applications, triggering a Roland *R-8* drum machine, a Roland *D-20* keyboard, an E-mu *Procussion*, and an E-mu *Proteus*. Since the *CP-16* offers such a wide range of MIDI trigger signal-processing options, you have quite a bit of power at your fingertips. For those players who wish to stretch out from playing "traditional" drums, experimenting with various tone sources will yield some very interesting results.

### The Drum Pads

Midi-Cyms drum pads are designed to give the player the most natural acoustic-drum-like feel possible. Their 12"-diameter, black heads are shock-mounted, and they "float" within the pad

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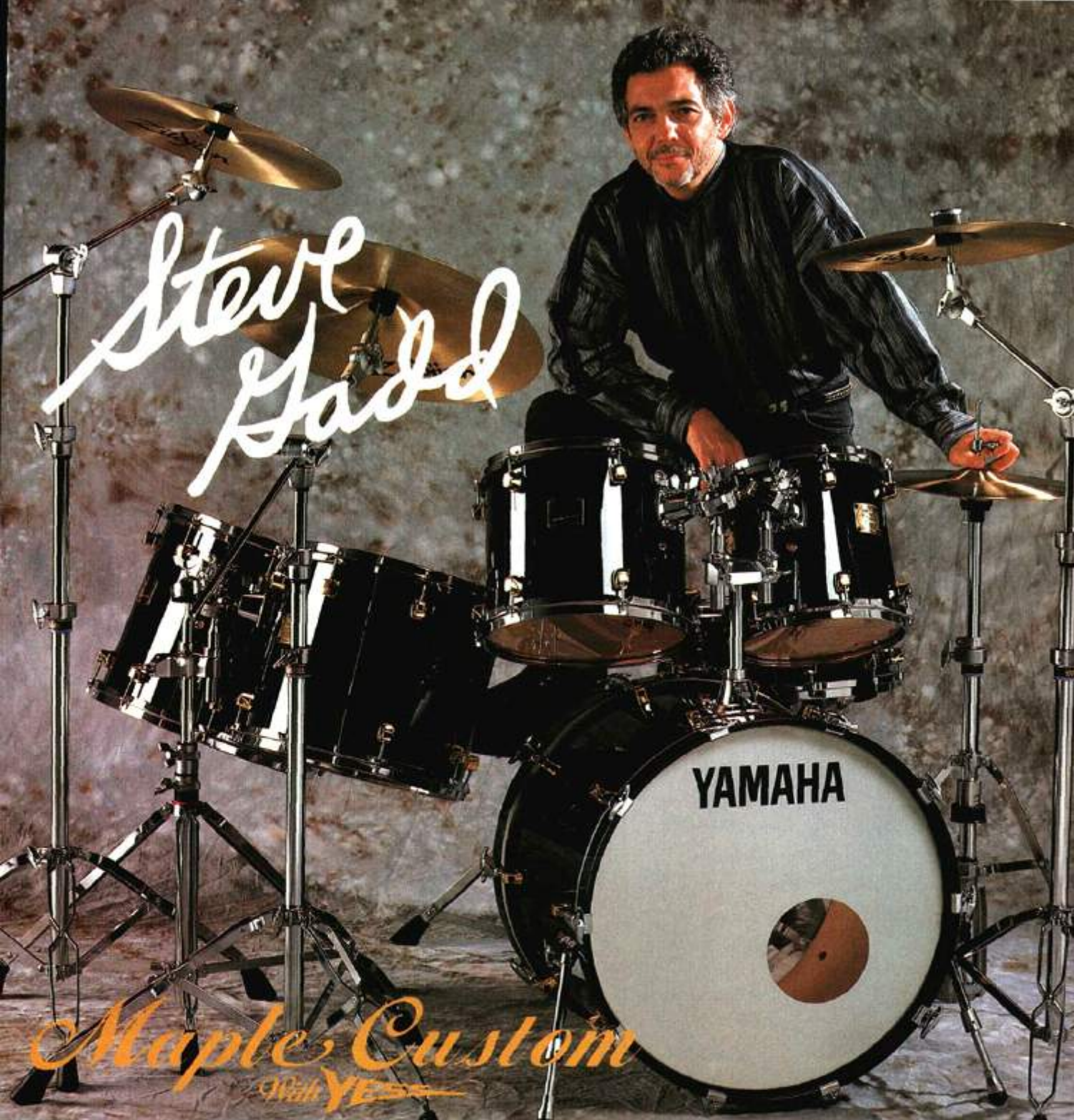


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casing. This allows them to respond to a stick attack much like an acoustic drumhead does—meaning that their heads will "give" in relation to how hard they are hit. By using this type of mounting approach, not only does the feel and dynamic response improve, but the direct physical stress on the player's arms is dramatically reduced.

I received two types of pads for this review. The first pad features a piezo-type transducer mounted under the head and a second piezo trigger affixed to the rim, allowing for rimshot techniques to be used. The second pad I received had two rim triggers attached, as well as the standard trigger under the head. On this pad the two rim triggers were mounted directly across from one another, opening up even further creative possibilities—such as rimshots and side-sticking.

As with the cymbals, I found the playing response of these pads to be very enjoyable. The feel was quite nice: semi-soft, with a good amount of natural rebound. The dynamic response was excellent for a piezo-type trigger. (In fact, it reminded me of the much more expensive FSR-trigger technology found in some other pads and controllers.) I experienced no problems with cross-talk, either between two pads on one stand, or between multiple triggers in one pad. The pads are rugged and feel very solid. They mount on stands using a standard Tama-type mounting bracket, which is the only area in which I could suggest

improvement. It would be terrific if Midi-Cyms offered the pads with a wider variety of mounting brackets.

Unfortunately, Midi-Cyms' recently released bass drum pads were unavailable for this review. The company sent me spec sheets indicating that the pads have a  $5\frac{1}{2}$ " trigger area, which is large enough to accommodate double bass drum pedals.

### Summary

The *CP-16* system is a winner. Whether used for live applications or in the recording studio, it certainly addresses most triggering needs, while offering new possibilities for electronics aficionados. By incorporating excellent drum pads and electronic cymbals that actually function like their acoustic counterparts, the *CP-16* is a truly complete triggering system. Suggested list prices are as follows: *CP-16* interface unit - \$475; 12" *MCC* cymbal - \$117; 16" *MCC* cymbal - \$133; 18" *RCC* cymbal - \$200; 12" *MHH* hi-hats - \$267; 12" drum pad - \$108; 12" snare pad with three trigger outputs - \$150; bass drum pad - \$300. New fluorescent *Gemstone* cymbal pads and less expensive "No-Choke" cymbal pads are also available. For further information contact Midi-Cyms, 840 W. Valley Blvd., Alhambra, CA 91803, tel: (800) 568-8523, fax: (818) 282-6242.



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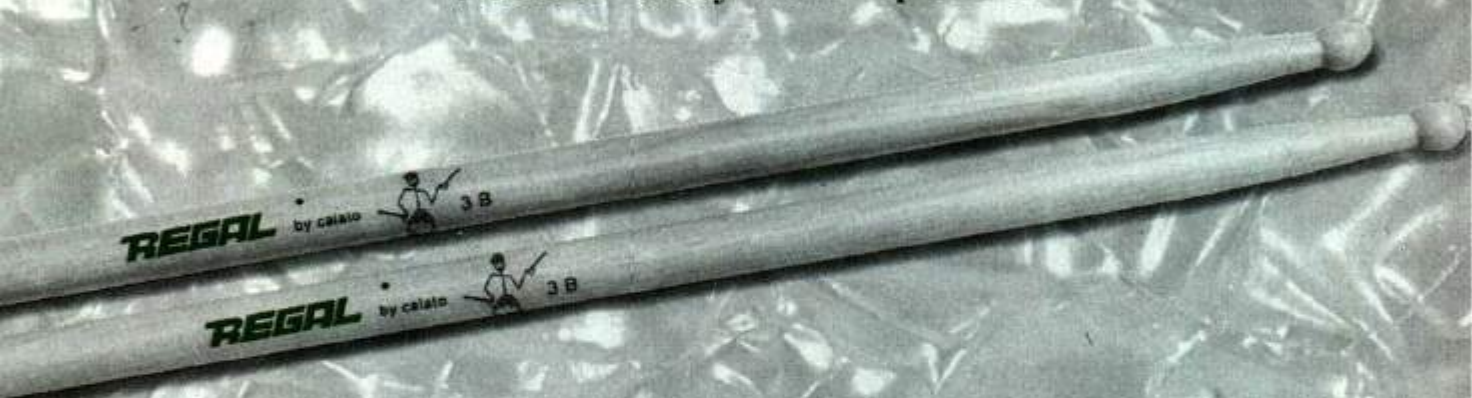
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## Highlights Of The 1993 Frankfurt Music Fair

The 1993 Frankfurt Music Fair brought exhibitors from around the world to Frankfurt, Germany from March 3 through 7. *MD's* Rick Van Horn was on hand to visit with representatives of the international percussion-products industry, and to view the products on exhibition. Here are Rick's choices as some of the most interesting items on display.



From Switzerland, Paiste debuted their new *Visions* series—black cymbals designed in conjunction with Terry Bozzio.



From the U.S., Randy May was showing an innovative new design in drum and cymbal stands. Independent leg adjustments allow for bi-level positioning, as shown here.



From Italy, Soprano drums feature solid-wood shells and a unique tensioning system that allows for a free-floating shell design.



From Turkey come Istanbul cymbals, with their half-hammered/half-lathed *Sultan* series.



From Canada, Rimshot *Power Groove* sticks now come in six new models.



Spain's Gonalca and Germany's Lefima companies offer models that span the traditional to the ultra-modern in marching and concert drums.



From Japan came this giant display mock-up of Tama's *Tension Watch*, a tuning device that combines a self-contained weight and a pressure gauge, to measure drumhead tension at each lug point.



Germany's Meinl is now offering cymbals in various *Additions* sets, which offer extra items at no additional cost.

For example, this *Raker* hi-hat *Addition* includes a 10" splash cymbal, free!



This exhibit (in which a French distributor was displaying instruments from Africa, the Middle East, and South America) is representative of literally dozens of similar exhibits, and reflects Europe's keen interest in ethnic and hand percussion.



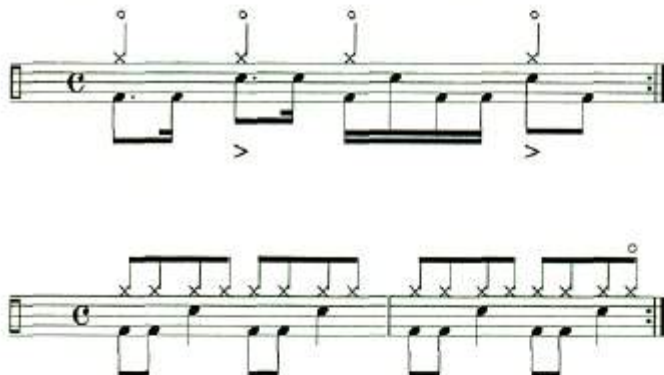
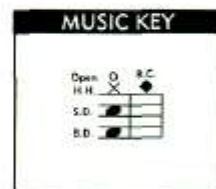
# Nirvana's Dave Grohl Nevermind



Photo by Lissa Wales

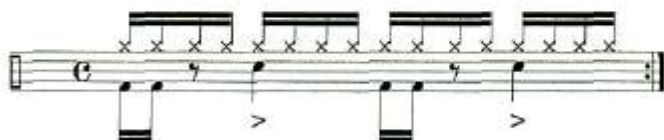
## "Smells Like Teen Spirit"

Last year was an amazing year for Nirvana, and their success helped to shift popular attention towards alternative music. At the core of their sound is Dave Grohl, an intense player whose finest attributes are his ability to lay down a heavy groove and switch dynamic levels from a whisper to complete anarchy. Everybody's heard "Teen Spirit," but here are the specific beats Dave plays, the first from the intro and chorus (loud) sections of the tune, the second from the verses.



## "In Bloom"

Dave keeps the following groove pretty consistent throughout the song, changing dynamics and tone by slightly opening up the hi-hat as the tune gets louder.



## "Come As You Are"

The following two-bar pattern is what Dave supports the verses with. His nicely recorded ride cymbal blends in beautifully with the *heavily* chorused guitar.

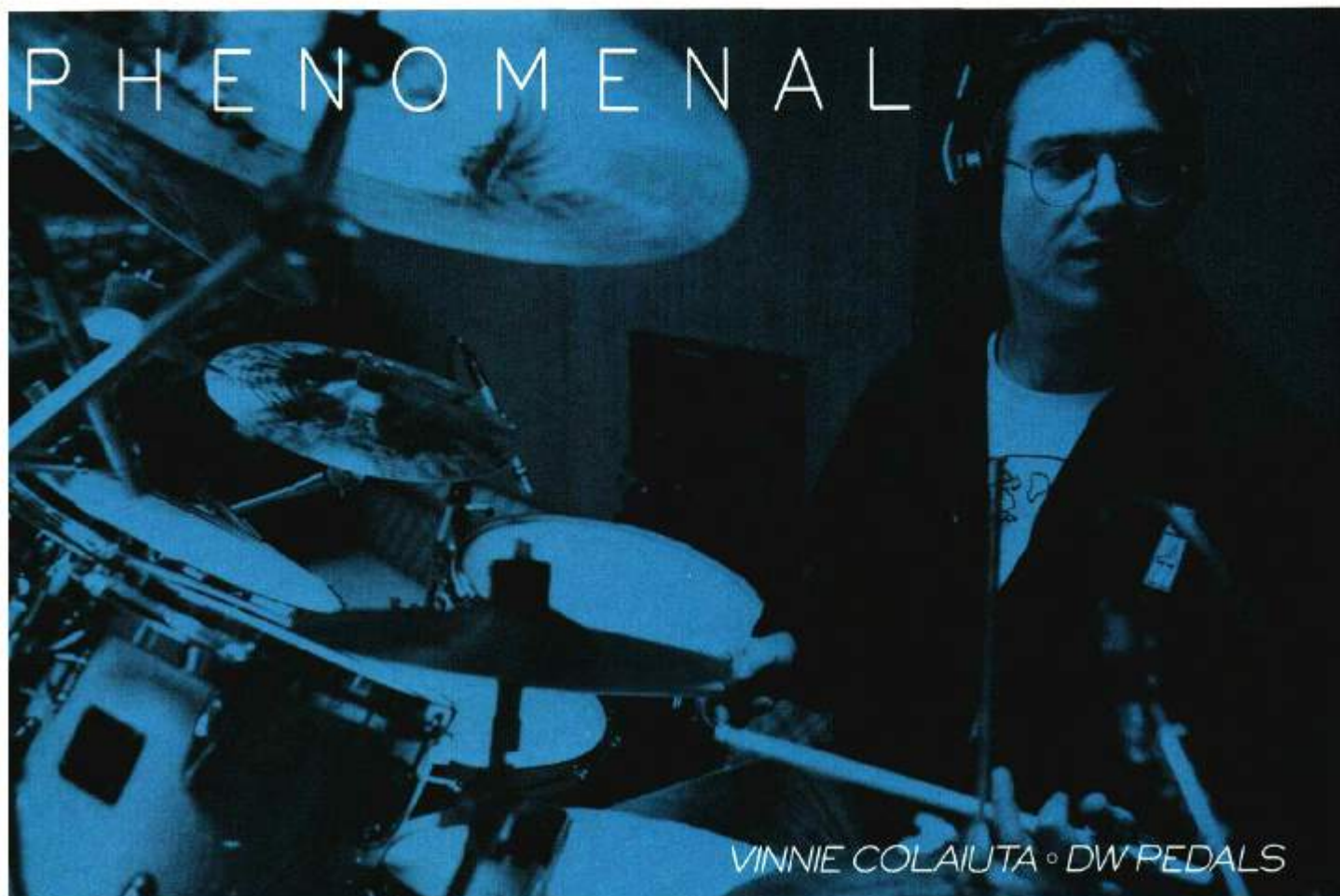


## "Breed"

This tune shows Dave's aggressive side, his opening multi-measure 16th-note snare fill setting the tone for the rest of the song. The beat he plays looks simple, but the feel and personality he projects into it just elevate the track.



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*Tony Williams*



continued from page 25

But music tore down all the barriers as far as age or background. Once you were on this playing field, everybody was an equal—as long as you played well. For me it was very insightful in terms of how music is such an interactive thing—not only among the musicians, but among the audience as well. You learn to improvise. It's like, "Keep that train rolling on the track." I mean, the little missed cues, hey, I'm thirteen. [laughs]

**AB:** What specific things might a rock drummer learn from listening to jazz?

**AVH:** I think the biggest mistake any drummer can make is to listen to one kind of music. Rhythm is the foundation of everything. When somebody listens to a tune on the radio, the first thing they do is either tap their foot or snap their fingers. Drumming has been around for as long as people can remember—for communication, for leading armies into battle. It's the most instinctive instrument, people instinctively feel the rhythm.

When you listen to different types of music, it's more important to capture the *spirit* of what you're listening to than what somebody's doing note-for-note. You've got to feel it on a bigger scale. You learn to listen to how the musicians interact. I've always looked at playing your instrument as a different way of talking or communicating. If one player is doing something, don't mimic him note-for-note, but kind of get the *feeling* of what he's doing. Of course, you're limited by how well you can play, but that's why you practice, so you get to the point where, when the thought comes into your head, you can execute it.

It's like learning a language. You learn word by word until eventually you don't have to think about how you patch it together. I'm not saying learn lick-by-lick, but do your rudiments at least. I didn't practice rudiments until about the second record. All the things I learned were things I had heard before, and I played my interpretation of what I heard.

**AB:** Taking the rudiments/language thing a bit further, there are certain writers where you can kind of tell they're trying to use the language very consciously.

**AVH:** Oh yeah, because they use these regular sixth-grade mentality words, and

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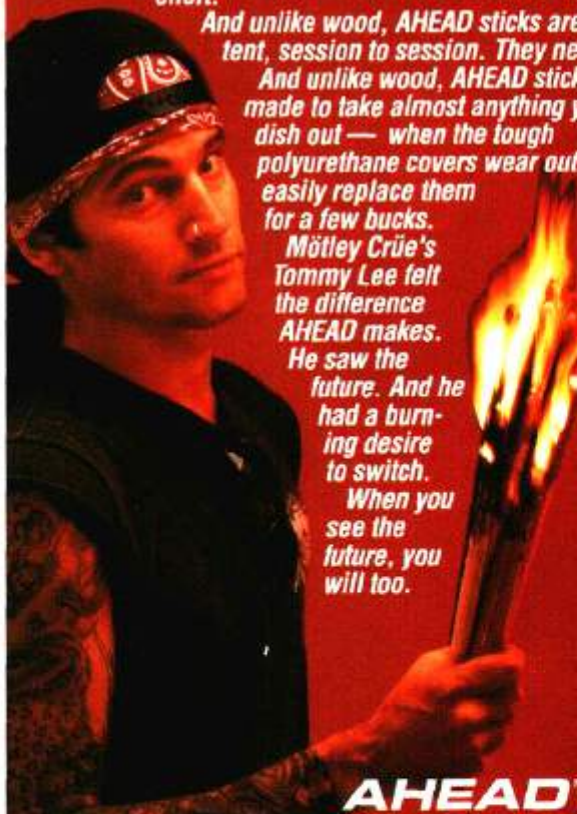

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all of a sudden a word pops up that you've got to look up in the dictionary.

**AB:** Well, then is playing drums kind of the same thing? Because you've got to take this language—rudiments—and you have to apply them but not *sound* like you are.

**AVH:** The drums have different colors, different textures, and you can do lots of things—within limits by the fact that you only have four limbs, and within the limits of the song. Once in a while you hear these ballads on the radio. They're cruising along with a nice feel, and all of a sudden, *[Alex mimics a wild drum fill]*. What was *that*? Okay, so you learned this new thing. So it's like what you were saying about sticking something in out of the blue—it's a little inconsistent. I think maybe that comes from time and experience. And the best way to get that is by playing with other people.

**AB:** You just mentioned limitations. It's been said that limitations can be good—like if you've only got a certain number of notes to play, those notes will mean more.

**AVH:** Absolutely. As a matter of fact, last year I went to a smaller drumkit. A couple of toms, kick drum, a snare, and a couple cymbals. And yeah, when you've got ten toms, instead of using tonality, all you ever hear is, *[Alex mimics a simple descending tom fill]*. Okay, fine. But I think it was Buddy Rich who said, "The less you use, the more creative you become," because you're painted into a corner, so to speak. And you have to use a little bit more ingenuity or creativity. It was actually Leonardo Da Vinci who said, "Large rooms distract the mind, small rooms focus the mind." If you have too much to pick from, you get confused. If your focus is narrowed down, it gives you much more of a sense of direction on what you can do.

**AB:** So was shrinking your kit down a conscious decision?

**AVH:** I think instinctively you go through phases, you kind of feel like it's time for a change. And at the time that's what I felt.

**AB:** As drummers, it seems we tend to add things to our kits and then figure out what to do with them later.

**AVH:** Oh, yeah. I remember in 1980, I had these RotoToms that were really just so damn far to reach, but they looked nice up there, tucked under a cymbal. But of course at some point you gotta play them, because everybody's gonna be looking. So

yeah, you go over there and play 'em for no reason at all. [laughs]

**AB:** Well, what about just physically reaching some of this stuff? I mean, you've had some pretty big setups. Was it ever a problem actually hitting things?

**AVH:** No, I reached it all. I think it was in 1988 that I had a kit that was three drumsets put together. I only played one of them at a time, but they were all differ-

ent. One was a North drumset, one was an electronic kit, and one was an acoustic drumset, and it was all on a rotating stage. And for whatever song that I needed a particular sound, I would just rotate the stage. It was that simple. But there were visual considerations. I don't mean, "Yeah, let's put on the make-up and make our hair stand on end." But there is something to be said about the visual

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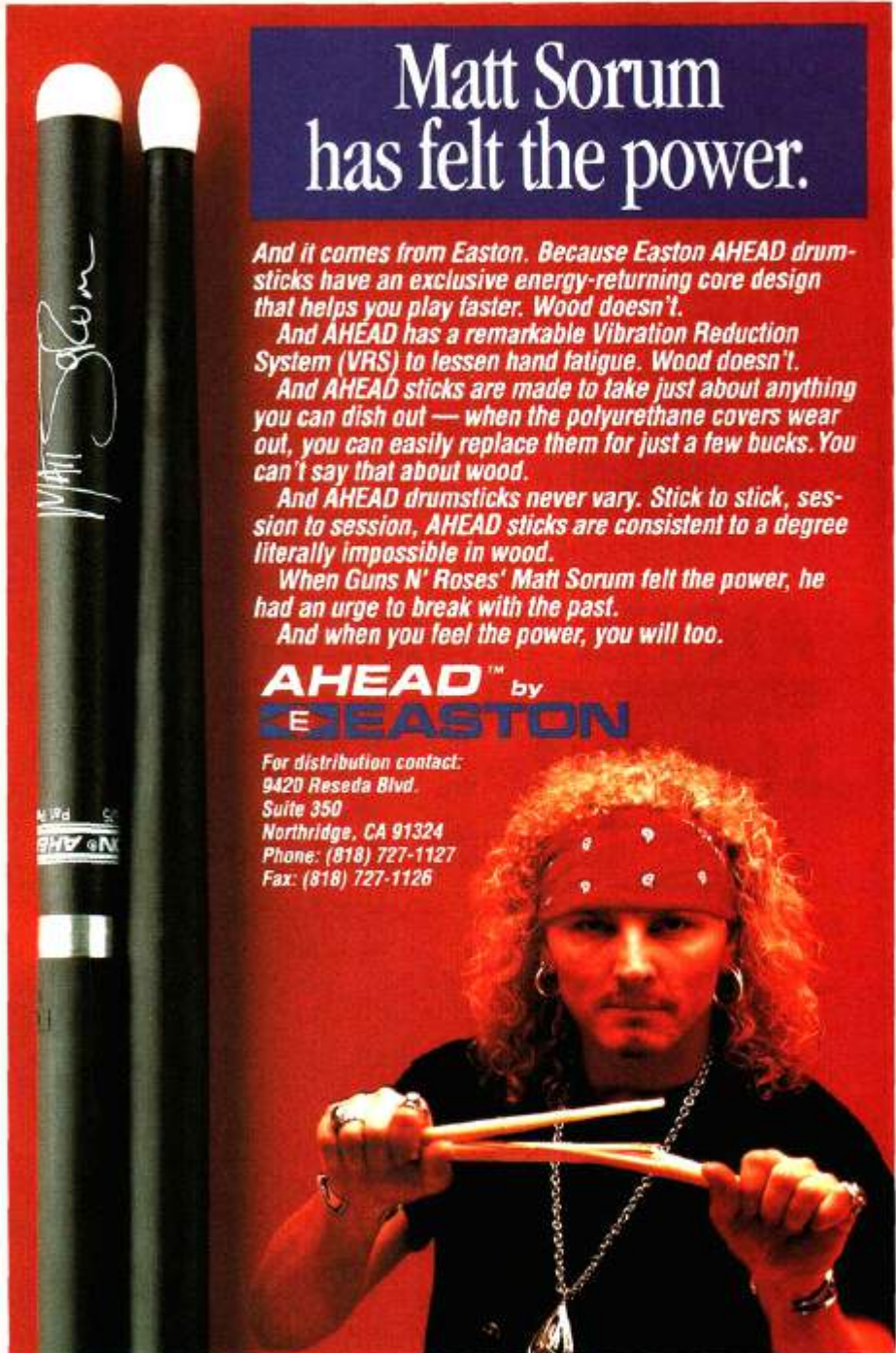
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aspect of drumming. Some of it is natural just because you're in motion. Right there it's already a physical or visual thing.

We were playing on a stage that was a hundred and twenty-five feet wide. That's roughly three times as wide as your average arena stage, and to have this small drumset in the middle of it looked very strange. I wasn't about to put up a hundred drums and not use any of them,

so that was part of the reason for this setup. It all worked out, and I was very happy with that.

**AB:** I noticed you're using permanently mounted mic's inside your drums. Does that work out pretty good for you?

**AVH:** It works out ten thousand times better than anything else I've ever done. That's because the mic' is isolated. You have much more control over the gain. If

a mic' is out in the open, you have to put limiters or noise gates on, which means the lighter notes aren't going to be heard. And everything else bleeds into it, so there's less control. Then add to that the fact that we're loud on stage—which we have to be because the audience is loud. We need to hear what we're playing. We call it the gas wars. You know, one thing comes up, and before you know it everyone is running at peak volume and the speakers can't take it anymore—not to mention your ears.

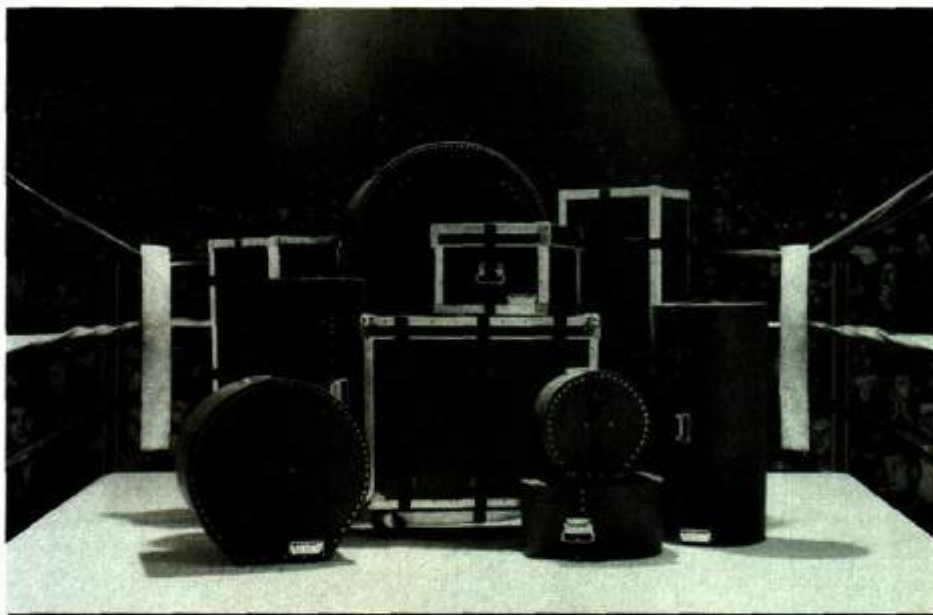
**AB:** It's the same thing for bands on small stages, isn't it?

**AVH:** Oh, yeah. When we played the clubs, the cymbals alone were enough to deafen everybody.

**AB:** Going through the mic's?

**AVH:** No, just if somebody was standing near a cymbal at ear level going SHHH-HH! Everybody would back away from the drums—which was actually fine with me. [laughs]

**AB:** You mentioned before about the really large stages. When you got to the point where you were all of a sudden playing large stages, were there any new playing considerations because of that?



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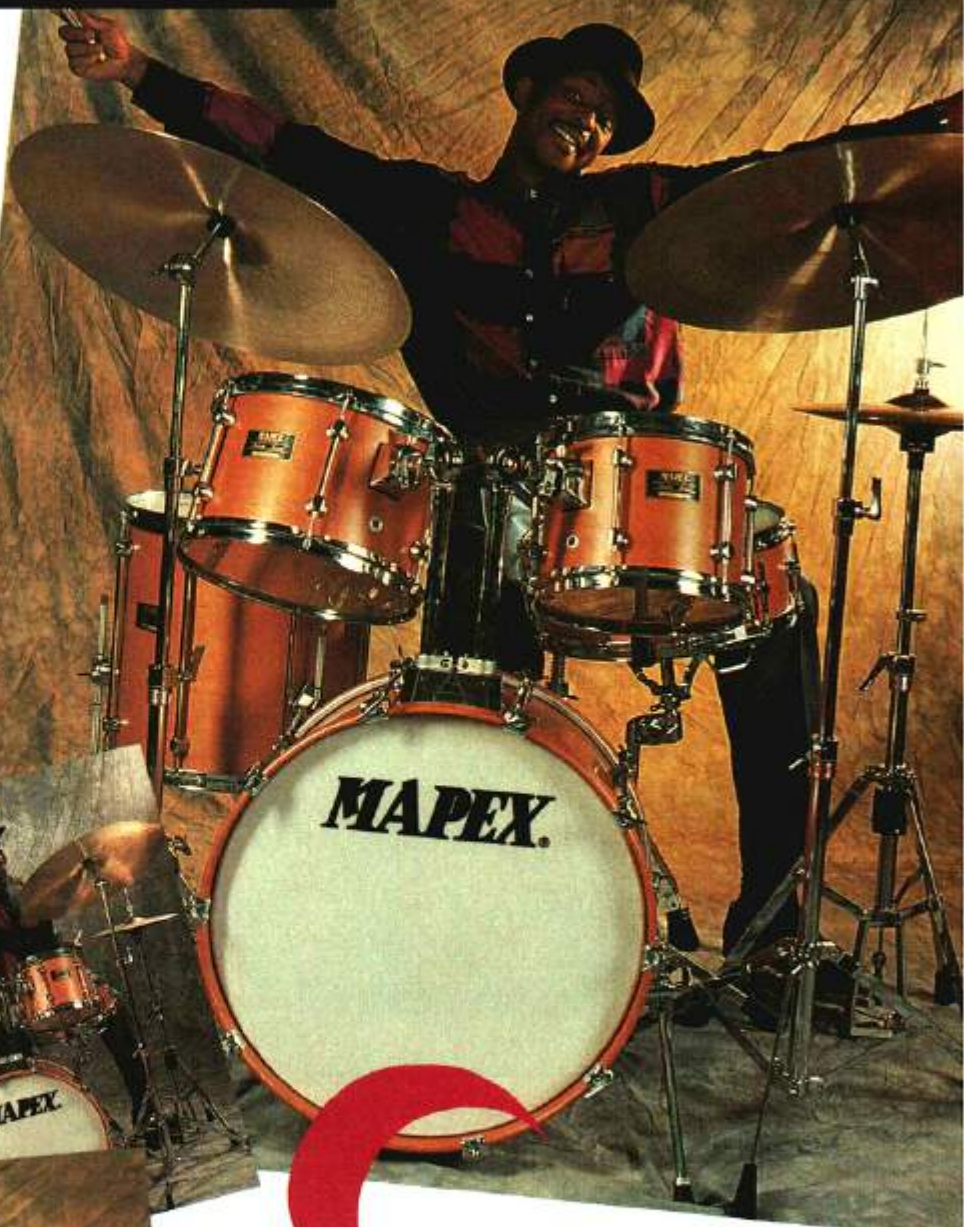
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**AVH:** I think in the beginning—and this didn't really last long—but when you're playing on a large stage and there are thousands of people, the first tendency is to just over-hammer the shit, because you think it's not going to come out. Playing through microphones and PA systems was new to me, and it took maybe a month or two to get out of the habit of wanting to just drown everything,

because it doesn't make any difference. At a certain point a drum just does not get any louder.

**AB:** You can also start cramping up when you don't realize how hard you're playing, right?

**AVH:** Yeah, but I think you also have to remember that there is a sense of excitement. I think the moment a player becomes blasé about walking on stage—

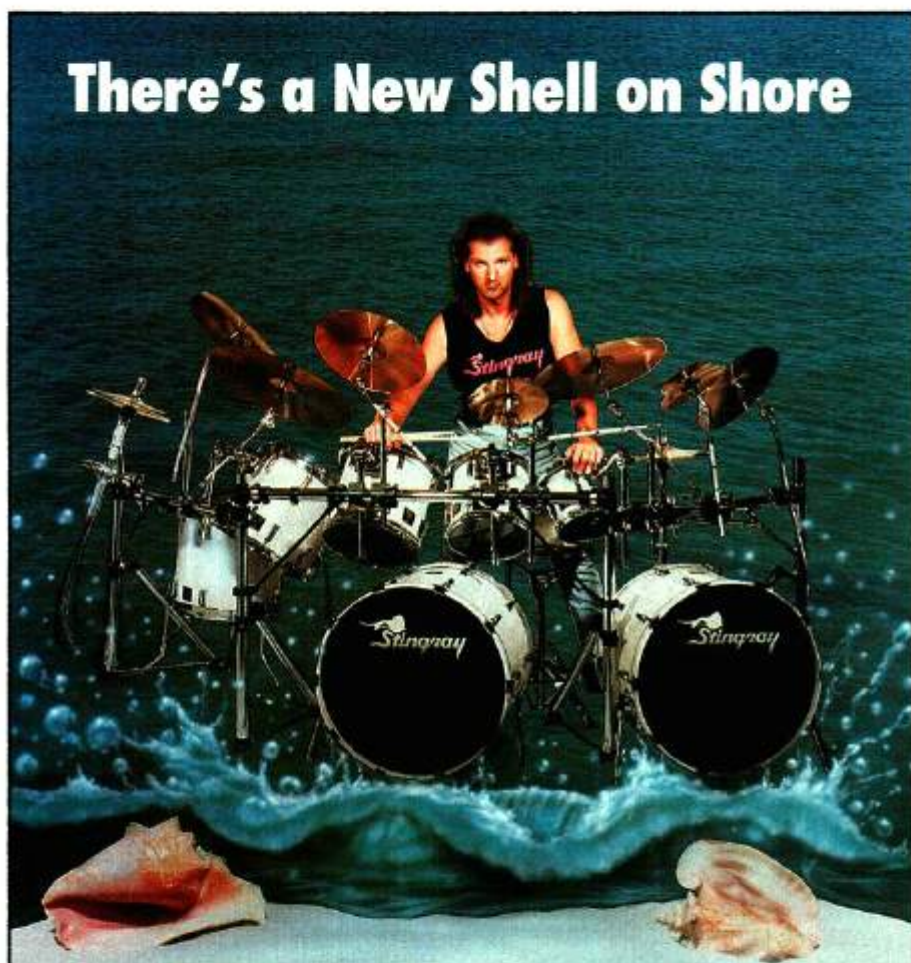
that's the time to hang it up. There should always be a feeling of excitement, but you have to channel that energy. You don't want to walk out in front of 20,000 people and just go "WAAAAA!" even though you feel like it. I'll be honest with you, that is how you feel. But if you can just stay loose, it's fine. We're at it two and a half hours, and we're hammering. We don't hold back. But you don't blow everything all at once, either. You can have that excitement in your heart and in your mind, but your body stays loose. And after about two songs or so, you're really into a groove and you're just transported into a different place. I can't describe it. I guess athletes call it an endorphin rush or something. At the end of the night, there's a great "Ahhhh," a release. It's very satisfying.

**AB:** Are there some specific things that one can do to loosen up?

**AVH:** I think the best thing is to just concentrate and tell yourself, "Stay loose." And after a while it becomes natural.

**AB:** How about physically staying loose before a show? What do you do?

**AVH:** It takes me about a half-hour to warm up. You know, you don't go running twenty-five miles without stretching



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a little bit.

**AB:** Do you do rudiments on the pad?

**AVH:** Yeah...you see, all those things I take for granted. That just comes with the territory. It's something that...who wants to know how many hours somebody practices? If you're into something, it should be totally consuming. The drums

for me are probably the most all-encompassing instrument, because it takes your brains, it takes your heart, it takes a commitment—it obviously takes your physical ability. Let's face it, you have to be able to do certain things or you can't pull it off.

**AB:** Let's change gears for a minute. A lot of younger drummers seem to have

trouble orchestrating parts to a song—changing their parts during the chorus, verse, bridge, or whatever. You've always done that in interesting ways.

**AVH:** I look at it like counterbalancing what's going on with the guitar. I guess some people describe it as finding the hole and filling it. It's not quite that simple—at least not on every song. Some songs are just downright straightforward. There's no way but to play 2/4 and do whatever you feel is right. Other songs, like "Spank," are wide open. I hear brass punches here and there and I'll accent them.

The good thing about music, and what drums have done for me, is that it puts your ego aside. You have to listen. You learn more from listening than from telling other people how smart you are. If somebody makes a suggestion about what you're playing, don't let your ego get instantly deflated. The whole idea is working towards a common thing.

I don't think I've ever mentioned it before, but I've played guitar, I've played saxophone, I played violin for four or five years, I've played piano for sixteen years, and believe it or not I have a degree in scoring and arranging. As far as "traditional" music training, the people in this band have had a lot. Whether it manifests itself in our music, who knows? I think the moment you become too technical, you lose all the heart and the feeling of it. But you can't help but have some of what you learned filter in and make you more knowledgeable about what you're doing.

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Some things, like song structure, are very obvious to me. In rock 'n' roll, you're dealing with a format that's three to four minutes long, and you have to make that piece of music make sense to the listener. That in and of itself is an art form.

I would say that, if you're at all inclined, play different instruments so you have a sense of what they do. The more you know about everything, the better it is. You can have a real sense of what's going on.

I also think that, even though I played all those instruments, with none of them did I feel the connection I did with drums. Now, some people might say, "Well, of course, because the drums are the easiest instrument to play." Well, I say, "You try it for a while." But everybody has a gift. Like Ed, for instance—I could practice until doomsday and I would never be able to play the way he does. And there's no *connection* between me and the strings. With drums there is.

**AB:** One drummer you've mentioned in the past as inspirational is Ringo.

**AVH:** One of the most interesting things about Ringo is how he managed to maintain a level of self-esteem—in addition to being a great player, of course. But he wasn't overshadowed as a human being by McCartney or Lennon or Harrison. I think he did a wonderful thing for drums because drummers would see him and think, "Hey, he's part of it too."

**AB:** Maybe drummers were told that they were separate from the rest of the band for so long that we began to believe it ourselves.

**AVH:** Well, yeah, maybe, but I think some of that is brought on by us, too. If you don't know much about what you're doing other than the beat.... Whether you want to admit it or not, there is a certain hierarchy, so to speak, in music. "I'm the *lead* guitarist! He's the rhythm guitarist." Now what does that tell you? "Oh, and by the way, he's the drummer. What's your name again?" You know? It's just the nature of the instruments. People tend to think that for some reason the lead singer or front man is more intelligent. Drummers, by the nature of the instrument, are put slightly behind the scenes. But it's actually a great place because not only are you providing the foundation, but the drive, the push. The drummer is actually the most powerful guy in the

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band because he can speed things up, he can slow things down—he can stop the whole damn thing. The guitarist can stop, but if the drummer keeps playing, people still think the song's going.

**AB:** Let's talk about your drum sound. It's always been unique and identifiable.

**AVH:** Ever since I can remember, it wasn't

only somebody's playing style that really impressed me, it was also their *sound*. Ginger Baker's drums sounded like Ginger Baker's drums. Bonham sounded like Bonham, even though there was a change from the third record to the fourth. Your instrument is like your second voice. It's the way you communicate. I think the

way that an instrument sounds is as important as what you're playing on it. I've spent a lot of time with the guys for the live shows to get it how I like it, and it's difficult because on record it's not always been recorded the way I like it. On the earlier records the drums were the last thing that anybody ever checked for sound. It's something I wasn't happy with, but it's something you deal with.

**AB:** Do you have an optimum sound in your head as a point of reference?

**AVH:** Yeah, but I haven't gotten it yet. [laughs] It gives you something to go for, though.

**AB:** Where have you gotten the closest to that sound?

**AVH:** On this live record, I think the snare drum is damn close. Again, in a live situation you're obviously not as controlled as in the studio. But there are little bits and pieces where I'm very happy. The nature of certain songs also affects the sound. The faster the song, the more careful you've got to be with the delays. The size of the room you're in and how the drums are tuned also affect the sound. Drums are much more important to the overall sound than a lot of people—guitarists, whoever—will admit.

**AB:** Well, following that point, what would you suggest to drummers having a rough time dealing with another musician's or producer's attitude toward *their* sound?

**AVH:** The first thing is you've got to be flexible. I can use our first record as an example. Having never made a record or

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been in a bona fide studio, I had all these dreams: "Wow, this is gonna be amazing! The drums are gonna sound like I never heard before." I get there and the first thing [producer] Ted Templeman says is, "Take that front head off the kick drum and the bottom heads off the toms." My jaw dropped. I was ready to explode, but it was not my place to do that. I knew enough about myself to say, "Just leave the room, calm down, then come back in." And when I came back in, sure enough, the drumheads had been pulled.

Be flexible. Your time will come. If you're really a musician, you have your whole life in front of you to get your sound. And I think that part of the fun is that whatever it is you're reaching for, it's always just a little bit out of reach. That not only provides the motivation, but it keeps the dream alive. If everything was perfect, then what would you do?

**AB:** Back to the first album....

**AVH:** I don't mean to say it wasn't fun. It was an honor and a pleasure to work with somebody like Ted Templeman, because he was very well-respected, and rightly so. He really knew how to put things together. But the drum sound was not what I

wanted. Now, of course, the problem is that everybody has heard that album, and they say, "Oh, I love that drum sound!" and I say, "Well, it is what it is."

I had the opportunity to meet Jim Keltner and Ringo, and Jim started to talk about the record 5150.1 was just about to tell him what I didn't like about it, and he told me how unique and interesting it was and how much he loved it. So I shut my mouth [laughs] and thought, this shows me something: Once it's on record, and somebody else has heard it, their interpretation is as important as what you thought you wanted. There's this old Zen saying: There are no inherently good or bad things; it's just your interpretation. So something I was initially extremely dissatisfied with turned out for the better.

**AB:** Van Halen records have usually had a very live vibe, right from the first album. At that time, things were really structured in the studios. But it seems like you were given some playing freedom.

**AVH:** If there were any limitations, they were brought on by ourselves, because of the fact that it was our first record. The idea of three people playing together beginning to end was unusual at that

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point. But Ted wanted the uniqueness of the band playing as an ensemble, and that's what was great about it. And of course you don't take as many chances because, God forbid, you're the one who messed up the take: "Now we've got to do it all *over again*."

**AB:** It still came across sounding more live than your average album from the time.

**AVH:** Oh yeah, absolutely. But had it been up to us, man, it would've been Cream revisited, [laughs]

**AB:** How about now that you've got this studio? Does that change things?

**AVH:** I hate to say that we're "smart" enough now, but we can instinctively tell when something becomes stagnant. You could record the perfect record, at least in terms of getting on record everything you wanted to do. But then the spontaneity and uniqueness of playing together is lost.

We'll use a hypothetical day. For the last record, the songs were more or less written one at a time and recorded as they were written. So it's been a week, we've worked on the song, we're happy with the sounds, Andy has adjusted the microphones. At the end of the day, we'll run it down one more time, and see what we

think of it. The next day, the first thing, we just mentally gear ourselves up the same way we would for a gig, and just put everything into it. We'll play a song two times—that's it. If we didn't get it that day, we leave it. We'll spend the rest of the day working on something else. Either it's there or it ain't. And we're the ones who know. There were little things on the last record where technically they could have been a little bit better, but it would have lost the feel.

**AB:** If you listen to old Kinks or Who records, there were times when that stuff was so sloppy, but it's not like people were thinking about that when they first heard it.

**AVH:** Hey, Keith Moon was a big influence on me. I just thought that he was the *embodiment* of drummers. He was the guy who was over the edge, going a hundred and fucking ninety-five miles an hour all the time. But you know, you kind of take a little bit from this and a little bit from that and put it all together.

**AB:** You've put a version of "Won't Get Fooled Again" on the live album.

**AVH:** Yeah, in the middle of a gig we always pick out something to play, and that night it happened to be "Won't Get

Fooled Again." It's kind of weird, because you listen to what Moon did, and you don't want to do it note-for-note. But at the same time you've got to cop his kind of feel, because that was a major part of their music. So it's always an iffy thing, and let's face it, the Who, Zeppelin—you don't redo that stuff to make it better. You can't.

**AB:** Let's talk about soloing. You told me before that a big part of it for you is getting something back from the audience.

**AVH:** When you play for people you get instant response. I think if you were alone in a room and you were going to record a drum solo, you would play different things. Live, you don't know what's gonna happen with the audience, which is the fun part about it. There will be a kind of swell in the audience, and they'll pick up on certain things—which may not necessarily be the most technical things you do.

Musically, a solo is a different texture altogether. I look at it like I'm playing a song, it's just that nobody else is playing along with me. It gives me more latitude to do what I want and also be back and forth with the audience. As far as a drum solo being a "showcase" for things that you couldn't do in songs, though...well,

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you've got a problem if you need to show what you can play in a solo. That just means you're not really applying everything you know in the songs.

**AB:** How structured are your solos?

**AVH:** It's not thought-out note-for-note, but on the live album, for instance, it's in three pieces. There is a theme, which is a five count and a seven count. Then I'll put something underneath, like the kick drum, that's static. That way, when you put something else against it, you'll know that it's changing.

The first part is an odd meter, seven against four and five against four; the middle part is in 4/4, even though I'm flopping around a little bit; and the last part is the same as the first, only it's against three now instead of four.

You know, I found early on that the whole night my mind would only be focused on the solo, which is kind of a strange way to think. But then again, you are the only one playing at the time, so if something goes wrong, it's much more obvious. You can't hide behind the bass player. But part of the beauty of a solo is, since there *is no* one else playing, it's the most improvisational time. It's not necessarily just a self-indulgent ego trip. I don't look at it that way because, quite honestly, just from a physical standpoint, it would be a cakewalk to play two and a half hours without doing that.

**AB:** You told me earlier that you haven't actually played for a week or so. Does it feel different after you've taken a break and then play again?

**AVH:** That's a good point. Sometimes you step away from it and you come back and it's invigorating. It's like, "Hey, wow! I didn't notice I had it down that good." It gives you an edge. You've got to be careful. You have to listen to yourself, your body, your rhythm. If you're touring too long, and it's really becoming work, and there isn't that edge, it's unfair to the audience.

Being a musician, you're covering one extreme to the other. On the one hand, it is the most selfish thing, because you're making music and you want to play it exactly the way you want. On the other hand, you've got to think about the audience—particularly when you're playing live. They came to see you at your best. You owe it to them to give them your all.

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# Understanding The Origins

■ by Eddie Bayers

Since this is my first article, I thought it would be a good idea to go back and look at the origins of drumming in country music—especially at how those early players and their sounds relate to today's music scene.

Country music began with very little drumming. In fact, many of the early artists wouldn't *think* of having a drummer in the studio. The first sign of drums being used on country records was in the early '50s, and what was being played was essentially brushes on a snare drum. (Producers, engineers, and artists just weren't ready for a full kit yet.)

To give you an idea of how drums were thought of in country music, for many years our famous Grand Ol' Opry wouldn't even *allow* any drums on the stage! In time the Opry did compromise, allowing only a snare drum. From there they stepped up to a snare and a hi-hat, and then finally, after a few years, to a full kit.

What finally changed this sort of bias against drums was the artists themselves—people like Patsy Cline, Jim Reeves, and Eddie Arnold. They began using full sets on their records, and in turn it became an accepted commodity. But they were still used in a low-key way. When you listen to some of those early songs, like Cline's hit "Crazy," for instance, you'll notice that the drums are not prominent in the mix. They might have been *felt* more so than *heard*, but the role they played was nevertheless *very* important to the feel of the music.

While it may seem that the drummers from the early country era weren't musi-

cally important, very creative, or even up to par with drummers playing other styles of music, nothing could be further from the truth. Early country drummers, especially the ones recording in Nashville, were also recording many of the pop hits of the day. Drummer Buddy Harmon, for example, played on country sessions, but also on big pop tunes by the Everly Brothers, Roy Orbison, and many others.

As for the misconception that country drummers were not creative, this might be because the impact they had on the music was in very subtle ways. They would come up with parts that worked to *complement* the music. To this end, many of the players experimented with lots of different sound sources. For instance, many brush beats, like the "train beat," were played with brushes on tape boxes. Buddy Harmon tried all sorts of different sounds in the studio, to the point where he once brought in an old tire and played on it! Obviously, being a drummer in country music didn't mean being unimaginative.

And while some might think that the drums were recorded in a sub-par manner because country engineers for some reason did not measure up to other types, well, that is another big misconception. Some of the early engineers worked in all styles of music. One particular engineer, Aaron Shelton, recorded a lot of country artists. Back then he traveled to many studios around the country and found that the techniques and equipment being used on country sessions in Nashville were state-of-the-art for the time. The *only* difference was the music being recorded.

Now that country is becoming so popular, it seems that there are a lot of different sub-genres of the music, and it's a challenge to be able to play drums correctly within each approach. Some of the artists I work with, like Randy Travis and Alan Jackson, may require a lighter, more traditional country approach. But others require a heavier drumming style, like Rodney Crowell, Alabama, and Leroy Parnell.

Country music has also taken in a lot of the pop music styles of the '60s and '70s recently, so bands like the Eagles, who were considered pop back then, would probably be considered a *country* act today. That just means there's an even larger amount of music that players should be familiar with, which requires study and practice.

All of this leads us back to the importance of researching the history of country music. Jazz drummers do the same thing: They go back and listen to the greats from the past to understand what the essence of *that* music was, checking out Max Roach and Art Blakey, for instance. The same is true for country drummers. They should go back and listen to as many of the early artists as possible—as well as many of the important artists who have come since—to really understand what the music needs. Some of the important early drummers who did a lot of good work were Buddy Harmon, Willie Ackerman, Kenny Butrey, and Jerry Carrigan. And some of the early artists that drummers should go back and study are Jim Reeves, Patsy Cline, Marty Robbins, Ferrin Young, and Eddie Arnold.

When I decided to check out what came before, I really *examined* the early drummers, trying to climb inside their heads to get an idea what they were thinking. How did they apply the bass drum? Did it mirror the bass part, or did it work around it? What was the best cross-stick sound—and how do I come up with a way to *create* that sound myself? How did they use a brush and cross-stick pattern to propel the tune? How did they approach the form of a song, or vary the different sections? What parts within any given drum pattern were emphasized to help establish the groove? These were some of the things that I was able to pull from those recordings.

In the studio today I'm constantly asked to reproduce the sound and/or feel of a record from the early days of country. I was recently asked to play something reminiscent of a Patsy Cline song, so I





played with just a brush and a cross-stick sound, with a kick drum only used on the chorus. Having a knowledge of the history of country drumming allowed me to play just what was right for the song.

Many of those early drummers should be admired, because they taught many of us who are recording today one very important lesson: what it means to play what is right for the song—and no more. That's an attitude imperative to studio drummers. I know a lot of guys who've said that they were tired of lowering their intelligence by playing this music, because they thought it was too simple. Well, you're not going to work much with an attitude like that, either live or in the studio. Whenever I hear someone say that, my response is, "Let me know when you don't want to do the call—I'm happy to do the work!"

Much of what we play today is directly linked to the drumming of years ago. What we're doing today to "upgrade" the music from what has come before is really only improving the *sound quality* of what we're playing with new technology. But the playing itself is still very similar, and that's why it *is* important to go back and listen to a lot of the early country artists. The integrity of the feel remains the same.



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# Odd Meter Patterns For Brushes: Part 2

by Clayton Cameron

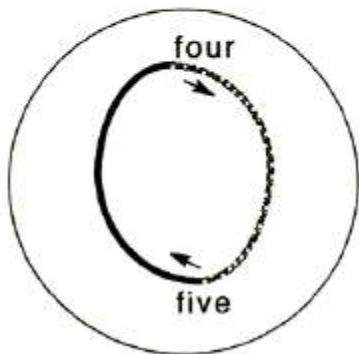


At clinics, many drummers ask me about playing brushes in 5/4 meter. By combining the 3/4 pattern I discussed last month (in Part 1 of this series) with this lesson's 2/4 pattern, you can do just that. The clock-wise conventional pattern I covered in my video, the *LivingArt OfBrushes*, applies here. Although it is in 4/4 meter, it can be used as a reference to the 2/4 pattern.

Once again, you start with a circular pattern for the left hand. As I mentioned last month, it's extremely important to get a smooth sound happening with your left hand before adding the right.

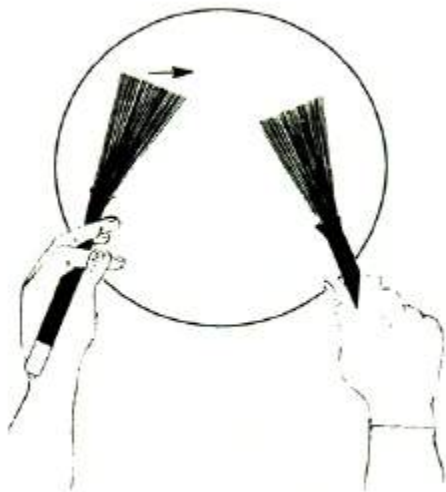
The following clock-wise circle is to be played by the left hand. It is divided into two shaded areas. Each area equals one quarter note. Counting the quarter notes, *sweep in one continuous motion* through each area. The following pattern will be used for beats 4 and 5 of a 5/4 pattern.

**Diagram 1**



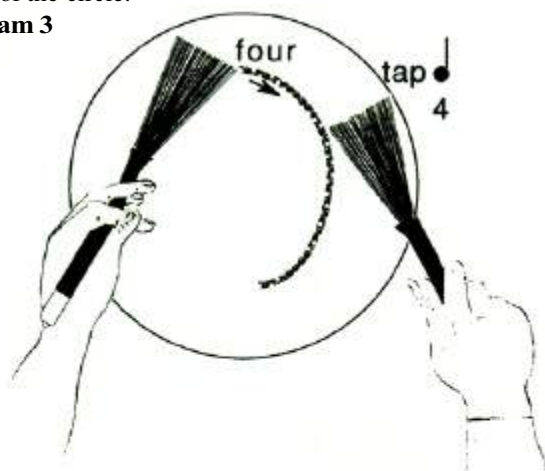
Next is the starting position for the hands. It is identical to the starting position of the 3/4 pattern from last month.

**Diagram 2**



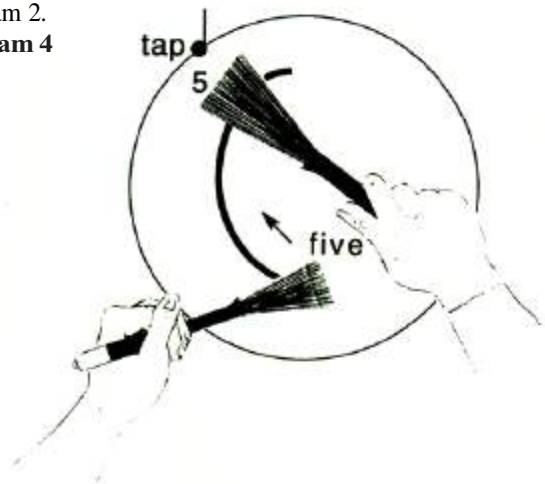
On the right side of the drum, the right hand taps beat 4 and then lifts off the drum. The left hand *simultaneously* sweeps beat 4 of the circle.

**Diagram 3**



The right hand crosses over to the left side of the drum and taps beat 5, while the left hand *simultaneously* sweeps beat 5 of the circle. Both hands then return to the starting position of Diagram 2.

**Diagram 4**



After you've practiced this pattern, combine it with the 3/4 pattern of Part 1. Notated, the 3/4 plus 2/4 looks like the following diagram. The circle graph represents the movement of the left hand in the first diagram of Parts 1 and 2.

Right Hand  
Left Hand  
with  
Circle Graph



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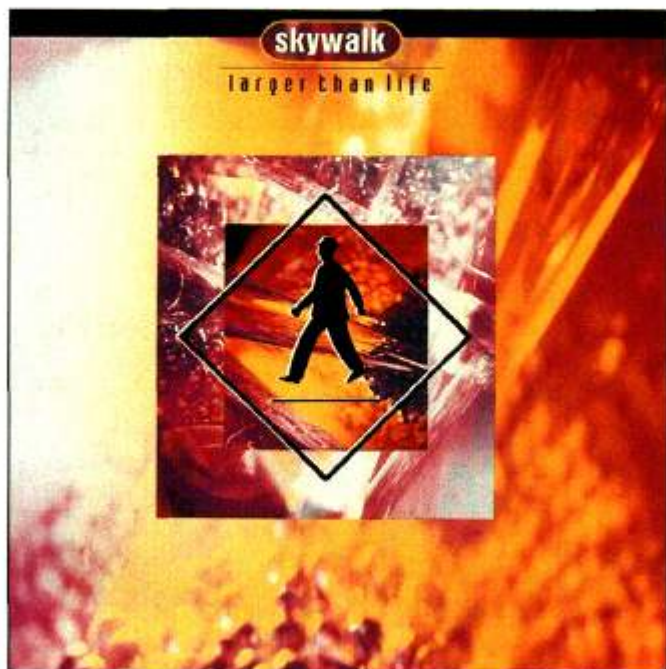
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## RECORDINGS



## SKYWALK

*Larger Than Life*

BluemoonR279173

MILES BLACK: kybd

HARRIS VAN BERKEL: gtr

TOM KEENLYSIDE: sax

RENE WORST: bs

JIM MCGILLVERAY: perc

KAT HENDRIKSE: dr

Weeds; Sweet Water; Larger Than Life; Neon Streets; Gethen; Carmen Cadillac; Angel Of Mercy; Chasing Phillip Marlowe; Opals; For Chris Gage

I often wish Vancouver-based Skywalk's fine soloists would just stretch out and blow on albums as I've seen them do live, but their recordings have always stressed soaring melodies and highly structured ensemble work. *Larger Than Life*, Skywalk's fourth major release, is their most measured and introspective to date, but also their most compositionally mature, infused with the stronger jazz sensibility of new keyboardist, Miles Black, and the adapted

lighter (if regrettably less fiery) touch of veteran Harris Van Berkel.

Kat Hendrikse's solid drumming is a study in playing loose within a tight groove, as is his ability to abstract common elements from an arrangement's multiple feels into hybrid patterns that glue everything together. He is especially effective in the ambitious pop tone poem "Gethen," which cycles through and overlays a lilting Irish hornpipe—complete with bodhran—straight-16th piano and guitar lines, and a meandering modal interlude.

Consistently powerful Rene Worst shines in a poignant fretless solo on "For Chris Gage"; Tom Keenlyside's alto work at least approaches the edge on "Chasing Phillip Marlowe," a driving, straight-ahead homage to classic Bogart PI films; and Jim McGillveray's inventive percussion dapples the many

rich, contoured landscapes throughout.

*Larger Than Life* is more full of finesse than muscle, but it's a noteworthy offering from a band whose distinctive pop-jazz voice has yet to receive the wider recognition it deserves.

• **Rich Watson**

## PETER ERSKINE

*You Never Know*

ECM 1497

PETER ERSKINE: dr

PALLE DANIELSSON: bs

JOHN TAYLOR: pno

New Old Age; Clapperclowe; On The Lake; Amber Waves; She Never Has A Window; Evans Above; Pure & Simple; Heart Game; Everything I Love



Peter Erskine frequently encourages drummers to get away from playing "drum licks"—phrases that the hands automatically fall into. On his new solo album, Erskine demonstrates the beauty of approaching each composition from its own point of view, without relying on stock beats and rhythm feels that tend to categorize the music (e.g., this is a bop feel, this is a funk tune, this is a reggae song).

While the improvisational nature of Erskine's drumming, as well as its basic "orchestration," will assure

the album's spot in the jazz bin at your local CD/tape shop, don't look for textbook examples of standard swing and bebop patterns. Rather, listen to the way Erskine supports, colors, and challenges the music being made around him.

Especially impressive is Erskine's frequent use of a single ride cymbal to propel and enhance John Taylor's piano and Palle Danielsson's bass. Not that Peter doesn't take advantage of the other colors of his drumkit, but the dominant element here is that one cymbal that Erskine explores to its fullest, bringing out an amazing range of timbres. The open sound of the acoustic trio combined with ECM's legendary expertise at recording cymbals lets you hear every nuance.

• **Rick Mattingly**

## SWIRLIES

*Blondertongue Audiobaton*

Taang! T67

BEN DRUCKER: dr

SEANA CARMODY,

DAMON TUTUNJIAN: gtr, vcl

ANDY BERNICK: bs

Bell; Vigilant Always; His Love Just Washed Away; His Life Of Academic Freedom; Pancake; Jeremy Parker; Park The Car By The Side Of The Road; Tree Chopped Down; Wrong Tuber; Wait Forever



Admirers of glazed-over guitars, precious vocals, and swirling melodies will enjoy Cambridge, Massachusetts' Swirlies. This charming quartet surrounds buoyant hooks and colliding song structures with numb psychedelia and occasional aggressive tendencies: Imagine some detached, loping art students' band tempered by dopey boy-girl vocals and gobs of chugging "Strawberry Fields"-ish guitars.

Drummer Ben Drucker orchestrates the music with witty blasts and a solid, pungent time feel. Chunky like Keith Moon yet loose enough to navigate the edges, Ben finds creativity in all the strange corners of the Swirlies' songs of vibration and disjunction. (*Taang!*, P.O. Box 51, Auburndale, MA 02166)

• **Ken Micallef**

## PAUL WELLER

Go! Discs/London 828 343-2

STEVE WHITE: dr, perc

JACKO PEAKE: sx, fl, vcl

PAUL WELLER: gtr, vcl, bs, kybd, perc  
Uh Huh Oh Yeh; I Didn't Mean To Hurt You; Bull-Rush; Round & Round; Remember How We Started; Above The Clouds; Clues; Into Tomorrow; Amongst Butterflies; The Strange Museum; Bitterness Rising; Kosmos



Is there life after punk rock? Paul Weller, late of the Jam, first found it with the Style Council, and now with his solo career. Steve White, who played with the Council, re-joins Weller on a melodic pop-rock outing that sounds almost '60s retro in its grooves and use of horns.

White plays with a looseness that is refreshing after listening to the L.A. sound of most of today's pop records. On the tag to "Bull-Rush" he sounds like a subdued Keith Moon, and on "Kosmos" his snare flies brightly over Weller's guitar. And his use of light percussion throughout the album is tasty and right on.

As Weller sings these new standards of the thirty-something crowd, wavering among lost loves and false decisions, White adds the beat of the 1990s.

• **Adam Ward Seligman**

## STEVE TURRE

*Sanctified Shells*

Antilles 314 514 186-2

STEVE TURRE, ROBIN EUBANKS,

REYNALDO JORGE: shells, tbn

CLIFTON ANDERSON: tbn

DOUGLAS PURVIANCE: bs tbn

MILTON CARDONA,

KIMATI DINIZULU: perc

HERLIN RILEY, IGNACIO BERROA: dr

BADAL ROY: tabla

ANDY GONZALEZ: bs

CLAUDE THOMAS: jun-jun

Exploration; Gumbo; African Shells:

First Interlude—Strength; Macho

(Para Machito); African Shells:

Second Interlude—The Dream;

Beautiful India; Toreador; African

Shells: Third Interlude—Happiness;

Sanctified Shells; Spirit Man

When top jazz trombonist Steve Turre puts a conch shell to his lips and blows, an



audience is at first shocked to hear how gorgeous the tone is. The aftershock is that this unusual horn is not a limited gimmick; the player fully intends to make adventurous and soulful music with it.

The same concept carries over to his twelve-year dream now realized: a disc featuring a shell ensemble. Turre trained fellow trombonists to play the various-sized shells, and the resulting sound and expression is exhilarating.

This disc is also a major percussion fete. In order to deliver the rhythmic layers that play so prominently in the compositions, Turre has assembled masters in many percussion traditions: Indian, Latin, African, Brazilian, and New Orleans. Dare we say that the ancient teaming of percussion with shells produces an ensemble of "earth tones"? Definitely yes, but not in the sense of wide-eyed new-age noodling.

The emotional range spans from the spiritually meditative ("Beautiful India") to cooking Latin ("Macho") to greasy New Orleans Gospel/blues ("Sanctified Shells").

Like the spiraled horns themselves, the music is natural, rare, and beautiful.

• **Jeff Potter**

## BRAD DUTZ

*Camels*

9 Winds NW CD0152

BRAD DUTZ: perc, synth, trp

DAVE KARASONY: dr

VINNY GOLIA: woodwinds

NELS CLINE: gtr

BOB MAIR: bs

Uncertainty; Pastrami; Coughin; Syria; Camels; Two Mushrooms; Quandry; Drool; Cuban Beach Tourists; Fragment Of Vindication; Glutton Man; Hilarious; Next Train

## SUBMEDIA

*Suffocating City*

9 Winds NW CD0149

BRAD DUTZ: perc, synth,

trp, melodica

DAVE KARASONY: dr, perc

BOB MAIR: bs, gtr, perc

Suffocating City; Thorax; Warm Ice; Metal Sculpture; Itch; Bailing On The Rack; I Sense The Worm; Nuclear Soup; Smalard And Melissa, Ned's Dream; Axle Cid

Eighty percent of the music on Brad Dutz's *Camels* is created by the percussionist himself on hand and mallet percussion, MIDI toys, trumpet, and melodica. Though the album has a bit of a demo aftertaste, there are some moments of great grooving. Guitar etchings by Nels Cline help liven the title cut, and Bob Mair's bass gives some human interaction here and there. But the most happening moment may be on "Two Mushrooms," a dead-on percussion jam with Dutz pretty much on his own, laying it down solid on congas with metal and drum effects, aided by a demanding Golia tenor solo and a nice trumpet/sax horn line.

Where *Camels* can sound technologically stifling at times, though, the percussionist's ensemble, Submedia,



is all about collective improvisation. *Suffocating City* is sort of Mark Isham meets Cecil Taylor, an approach that works very well on tracks like "Thorax," where the players are able to keep a nice loping groove going while engaging in all kinds of playfulness. On "Itch," for instance, the drums come in completely ignoring what the bass is doing, and the bass just keeps going strong. These musicians know each other well enough to pull this sort of thing off—as well as create some haunting soundscapes, like on "Axle Cid."

*Camels* and *Suffocating City* are two distinct but interesting views of one of the more talented multi-percussionists on the scene. (9 Winds, P.O. Box 10092, Beverly Hills, CA 90213)

• Robin Tolleson

## VIDEOS

### JACK DEJOHNETTE

*Musical Expression On*

*The Drum Set*

Homespun Tapes

Box 694

Woodstock NY 12498

Time: 100 minutes

Price: \$49.95

You can tell a lot about a musician's personality by the way he plays. Drumming especially seems to reveal much about the thought processes—in some cases even the spirituality—of an individual. This is certainly true of master-drummer Jack DeJohnette: His playing displays something much deeper than just beats and rhythms. And that must be one of the reasons he has remained one of the most important drum-

mers of the past twenty-five years.

Jack DeJohnette's relaxed, thoughtful, and deeply felt playing always comes across on his recorded works, but it's even more evident here on his first instructional video. And while there may not be a lot of exercises per se, Jack does play *quite a bit*. In fact, a majority of its 100 minutes are solid drumming—Jack either soloing in different styles or playing through technical (and musical) exercises for the hands and feet.

Jack offers up suggestions on playing dynamically, staying relaxed, and getting a big and melodic sound from drums and cymbals. There's just enough dialog from him (coaxed along by interviewer Harvey Sorgen) to give insight into his playing.

Other topics covered include ride cymbal technique (at all tempos), playing time, phrasing, brushes, tuning, and even choosing cymbals. And the low-key, intimate setting of this video (along with clear camera angles showing everything that's going on) only adds to its value. This tape will inspire you on many levels.

•William F. Miller

### DAVE WECKL AND WOLFREDO REYES, SR.

*Drums And Percussion—*

*Working It Out, Part 1*

DCI Music Video

15800 N.W. 84th Ave.

Miami FL 33014

Time: 70 minutes

Price: \$39.95

The tricky task of teaming a drummer and percussionist is a skill acquired through time-

honed instincts rather than predetermined rules. It's more about understanding than technique. Appropriately, this video is not presented as an instruction session but rather as an informal clinic in which the viewer is invited to listen, watch, and absorb.

Dave Weckl's stated purpose is to demonstrate how to create forward musical motion by making both parts as one. Reyes and Weckl casually discuss their approach of allowing mutual space and avoiding part doubling. Along with bassist John Pena and keyboardist Otmaro Ruiz, the hard-grooving duo applies their concept in segments grouped by different style/feels: 8th-note ballad/rock, funk-rock, Latin rhythms, and shuffle/funk/hip-hop triplet grooves.

When exploring contemporary Latin/Afro-Cuban grooves, the pair is especially exciting. Dave plays his funkified version of *songo* while Walfredo frames it with an authentic percussion interpretation that was personally passed on to him by the groove's founding father, "Changuito." In another highlight featuring a "meeting of different schools," Walfredo plays an old traditional Cuban rhythm, *danzon*, while Dave underpins it with a contemporary half-time funk feel.

Long on inspired playing footage and short on unnecessary chatter, *Working It Out* is worthwhile through many viewings.

•Jeff Potter

## BOOKS

### CYMBALS: A CRASH COURSE

by Mitchell Peters and Dave Black

Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.

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While the title "A Crash Course" is a pun on the subject matter, it's also an accurate assessment of this book's contents, which give an overview of cymbal techniques for drumset, orchestra, and concert band use. It's not a method book that will develop playing styles, but rather a survey of different methods of obtaining sounds from cymbals, from riding on them with a stick to scraping them with the handle of a brush to crashing them together in pairs. For an intermediate level drumset player, much of the drumset-related information will be obvious, but the orchestral and concert band section may prove enlightening even to more advanced players. Several examples from the classical repertoire are notated, with suggestions regarding how to achieve the desired effects. In addition, there is a glossary of terms in English, Italian, German, and French.

The book also contains brief chapters on the history, types, and care and maintenance of cymbals. Again, many players will be familiar with some of this information, but band and orchestra directors, percussion methods class instructors, private drum teachers, and drummers in general could find this 60-page text very useful as a quick reference to a variety of cymbal-related topics and techniques.

•Rick Mattingly





## ROD QUINN

"Any time I have been recording with the Paiste Line cymbals, and also on live work, the engineers always ask me what cymbals I am using. They say they are so nice to mix and record with... One producer even asked if he could borrow them for his next session, as the band he was about to work with were using another brand... Need I say more?!"

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- 3) 18" Paiste Line Full Crash
- 4) 10" 3000 Rude Splash
- 5) 18" Paiste Line Power Crash
- 6) 20" 3000 Power Ride
- 7) 14" Paiste Line Heavy Hi-Hat
- 8) 19" 3000 Power Crash
- 9) 20" 3000 Rude China

### Favorite recordings

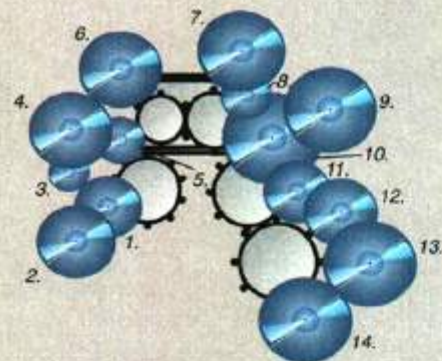
Rod has played on:

"Soundtrack for Point Break"

P.I.L.

"2 Tribes By 2 Tribes"

2 Tribes By 2 Tribes



## JOHN KEEBLE

"Having used the Paiste Line extensively over the last year, they continue to blow me away! If you can't find what you want in this line, you must be a bass player!"

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- 4) 18" Paiste Line Thin China
- 5) 10" Paiste Line Splash
- 6) 18" Paiste Line Full Crash
- 7) 19" Paiste Line Power Crash
- 8) 10" Paiste Line Bell
- 9) 20" Paiste Line Thin China
- 10) 22" Paiste Line Power Ride
- 11) 14" Paiste Line Dark Crisp Hi-Hat
- 12) 16" Paiste Line Fast Crash
- 13) 20" Paiste Line Full Crash
- 14) 20" Paiste Line Heavy China

### Favorite recordings

John has played on:

"Through The Barricades"

Spandau Ballet

"Man In Chains"

Spandau Ballet

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- 4) 16" Paiste Line Power Crash
- 5) 20" Paiste Line Power Crash
- 6) 18" Paiste Line Power Crash
- 7) 13" 602 Paiste Line Heavy Bell
- 8) 22" Paiste Line Power Ride
- 9) 17" Paiste Line Power Crash
- 10) 20" Paiste Line Full Crash
- 11) 22" Paiste Line Full Crash (Prototype)
- 12) 22" Paiste Line Heavy China
- 13) 18" Paiste Line Heavy China
- 14) 18" Paiste Line Heavy China

### Favorite recordings

Nicko has played on:

"Making Magic"

Pat Travers

"Peace Of Mind"

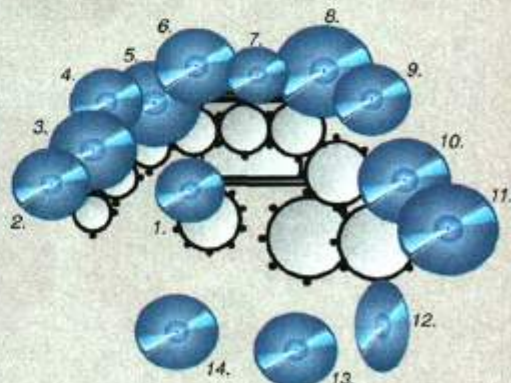
Iron Maiden

"Fear Of The Dog"

Iron Maiden

"Downtown Flyers"

Streetwalkers





# A Look At Falcon Design

by Rick Van Horn

You've seen the customized "drum cages" of drummers like Blas Elias, William Calhoun, Greg D'Angelo, Phil Varone, and Nicko McBrain on arena stages and in MTV videos. You've also seen them mentioned in several *MD* interviews. Some are relatively unobtrusive and functional, while others feature exotic shapes, spikes, lightning-bolt cymbal rods, and other fanciful visual enhancements. But what they all have in common is their method of construction: a legged platform fitted with curved and angled tubing, on which drums and cymbals are suspended in every conceivable manner. And all of these unique cages have something else in common: They were created by Tom Falicon, of Falicon Design.

Ironically, as highly visible as they are, drum cages are only a sideline—a "labor of love" for Tom. His main business is the manufacture of high-performance motorcycle crankshafts—along with parts for food-service machinery, marine equipment, coast guard aircraft, and even missiles. To service this business,

Tom operates a high-tech facility in Clearwater, Florida that utilizes some of the most sophisticated, computer-controlled lathes and other fabrication machinery you could ever hope to see.

But Tom is also a drummer. And as such, he couldn't help turning his creative talents as a machinist toward the construction of something relating to drums. As he tells it, "I played when I was a little kid. I had my little Ludwig kit in the '60s. But in 1970 I sold it to buy a motorcycle. I rode and worked on motorcycles for years, and started my business because of them. Then about five years ago, I sold a motorcycle, used the money to buy a big double-bass drumset, and got back into it again.

"My wife, Magdalena, bought me a Tama *Power Tower* cage for Christmas," Tom continues, "and I looked at it and thought, 'This is okay, but it's pretty plain. I have a bender and all this other equipment sitting over in the shop. I have to make something more radical!' So I bought some stainless-steel tubing and just started getting creative, doing things with angles and shapes that you couldn't buy anywhere. I took pictures of what I was doing to a dealer in the area, and they got excited, too. After I made about six or seven different design changes on my own cage, I got hooked up with Steve Wacholz, of Savatage. I made a cage for him, and when he played in the New York City area, Marco Socoli, at Sam Ash Music, saw it. From there, a market just sort of developed. There are only two of us doing custom cage work in the country: Greg Voelker and myself. There's plenty of work for two specialists."

For what is essentially a part-time operation, Tom is kept busy with the production of his unique cages, due to the level of demand. At present, this production is divided between large custom cages and smaller "standard" models specifically designed for sale through retail music stores.

"It seems like there's nothing in between," says Tom. "Either a drummer wants to spend a ton of money with us, or a music store wants to buy a couple of small ones. The big customized cages are my favorite jobs, because they involve the most creativity."

Falicon cages combine steel platforms, stainless steel tubing, and special clamps and hardware—all designed by Tom and produced in his plant. The high-tech milling machines that produce the parts for Falicon's clamps are the same ones used to make extremely sophisticated motorcycle parts and other specialty compo-



Tom Falicon is almost dwarfed by one of his custom drum cage creations. (As a matter of fact, Tom built the drums, too!)

nents.

"I use the best, most expensive machines that money can buy," says Tom. "I could get them cheaper, but they wouldn't last as long or hold the tolerances as well. When you're making parts for airplanes or missiles, they have to be perfect. And drummers should get nothing less. If I can't make something perfectly, I just won't make it."

In mid-1992, Falicon Design moved into a new location, in order to facilitate a smoother, more linear operation. "We are completely self-sufficient for everything other than plating," says Tom, proudly. "Parts come in as tons of steel or aluminum, and are finished when they leave. We don't have to send anything out to have pieces added or to be polished. That way we can deliver when we're supposed to, and be sure that the part is perfect."

Speaking of parts, how are the parts for a drum cage designed? "I draw up a viable print," explains Tom, "then I give it to a guy whose job it is to make pro-quality blueprints. Then my technicians have blueprints to work from. In some cases, however, I don't use a blueprint. I work with the operators—changing parts, changing radiuses. When I get what I want, I'll give the part to a drafting company to have a blueprint made. And of course, the designs are all on computer programs, too—telling our production machines what to do, how to do it, and how fast to do it.

"We make every part of our clamps precisely for use on our cages," continues Tom. "That means I don't need memory locks for the clamps, because they're bored exactly to the size of our tubing. Having a clamp that's strong—because it employs a better alloy—allows me to do that. With clamps made of lesser-quality alloys, you have to make the clamp with a little bit of sloppiness. Otherwise, if there's a bump in the tubing, the clamp would just break when you tighten it down. Our clamps will take any amount of pressure; they just love it. We're speeding up production on the clamps so that we can be competitive with other brands of rack clamps as retrofit items. We fit the same size tubing as Gibraltar and Tama; we don't fit the smaller Collarlock or Yamaha tubing."

Falicon's clamps are made with stainless steel fittings and aluminum bodies. The cage tubing is of stainless steel, while the platform bases are made of regular steel angle-iron, with steel mesh grates for their tops. Leg holders and other fittings are welded to the bases. Welding is also used to create some of Tom Falicon's unique—almost trademark—lightning bolts and other exotic tubing shapes. Tom points out—with justifiable pride—that sometimes the polishing of these parts alone can take up to eight hours.

The larger curves and angles that form Falicon's cages are created on rolling and bending machines. "There are two types of bending for the tubing. One is actually rolling, to get a radius—or curve. Other times, you actually need an angle; you have to do a bend—anything from a slight bend to 90° or more.



These are just a few of the high-tech machines used to create Falicon products.



Tom demonstrates how tubing is rolled to create curved cage sections.



Various portions of the cages are welded together.



Magdalena and Tom Falicon run the business together. They're pictured here atop one of Tom's mini-cages.



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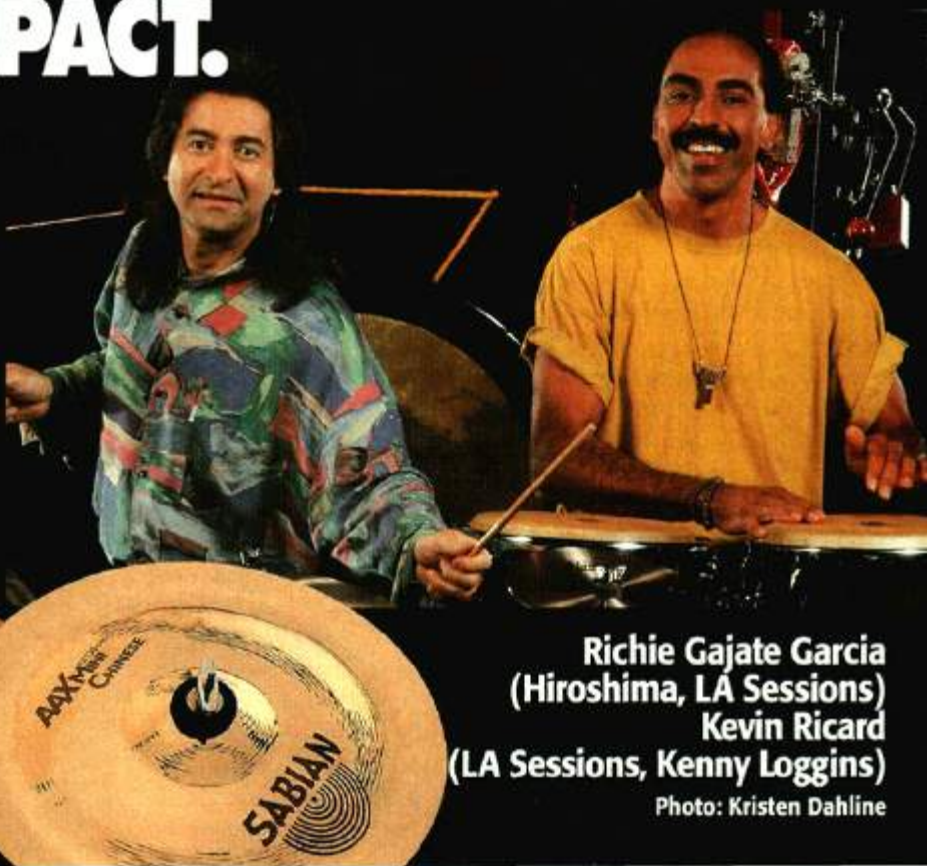
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(Hiroshima, LA Sessions)

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"I only use stainless tubing, even if the cage is going to be powder-coated with a color. I don't particularly love powder-coating—although I use it on bases because it offers more durability than paint. But I think it's impractical for tubing, because as soon as you put on a clamp, it mars the finish."

Tom's talents for bending tubing were put to the test recently, on a job for Hammer's tour. "I had to make two spherical cages," says Tom. "They came up with the design and said, 'This is what we want: You figure out how it should go together and come apart.' I had to start with 25'-long pieces. Tubing isn't even available at that length; we had to weld pieces together to begin with. Then we had to roll them outside in order to have enough room. The pieces ended up being circles about 7½' in diameter. I repeated the process eight times in order to create what they wanted. We worked it all out so that those giant globes fit into four cases—with some of the drums left on them."

Designing and constructing such elaborate units is no easy task, as Tom explains. "When people see a big, finished, custom drum cage, they don't realize that there was *nothing* there origi-



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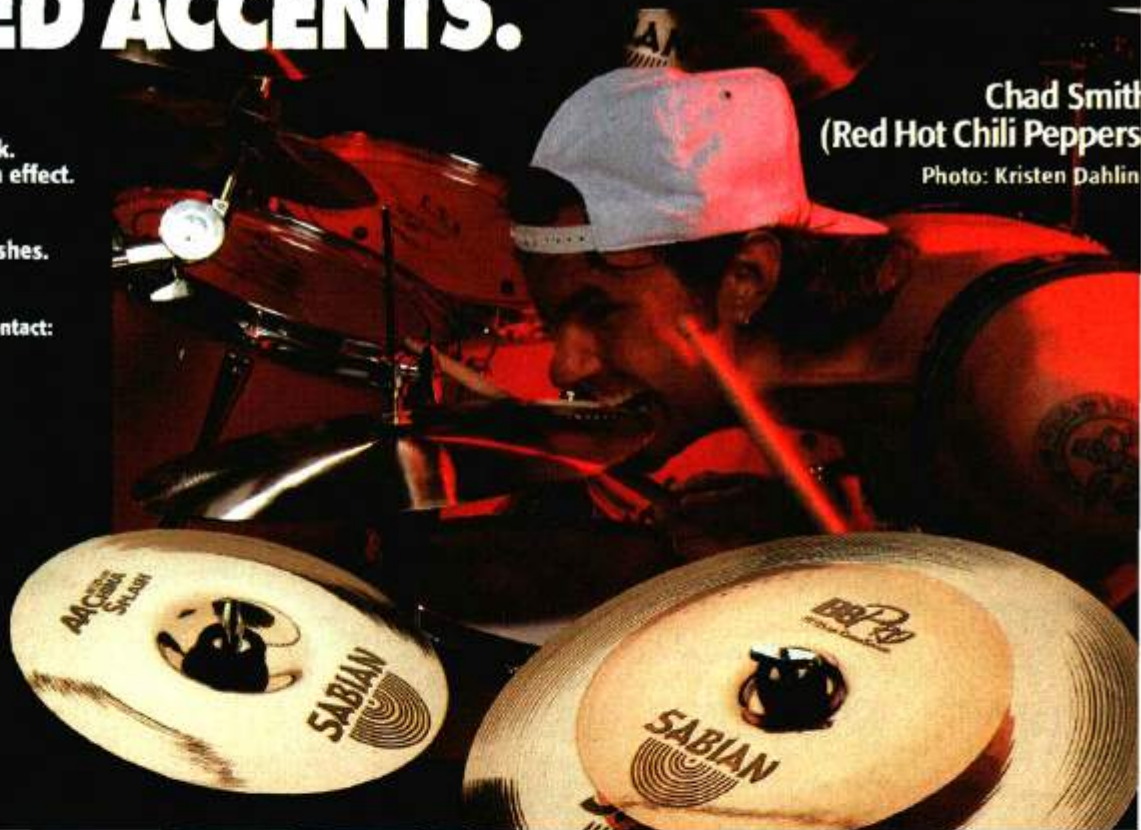
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**Chad Smith**  
(Red Hot Chili Peppers)

Photo: Kristen Dahlin

nally. It came out from just an idea. A lot of times I'm just given a concept; other times I get a blueprint. I have to make it all mesh, and have it look proportional. Sometimes I get someone who tells me, 'I want cymbals here, here, and here, and drums here, here, and here. Make it a little bit adjustable, and that's it. Go for it!' I've done that a lot—most of the time with 100% success. I always have to put a little bit of adjustment capability in, even if they tell me not to. That's because sometime's it's a production person, rather than the drummer, who's putting in the order. Sometimes it's the drummer, and he or she isn't mechanical. I have to keep that in mind."

How did Tom gain such confidence from drummers and production managers that they would give him free rein to design an expensive drum cage? "It was hard at first," he replies, "because I had no credibility within the music industry. Nobody knew me. And sometimes I'd get this great drummer to work with—only to find out that he or she was as stupid as hell about machining. You can't insult the person, but you do have to say, 'Look, we have to do things certain ways. We can't *do* what you want the way you want to do it.'


"Sometimes," Tom explains, "drummers will give us ridiculous sizes. We know the cage needs to be half that size, but we have to convince *them*. I tell them to take a tape measure and lay out the size they've called for—in their living room. Only then do they realize, 'Oh God...that's entirely too big.' Many drummers just have no concept of scale.

"My favorite situation," Tom continues, "is when drummers can come in and work with me. We can get a lot done in one or two days—enough that they can leave knowing that everything is where they want it to be. Drummers are fun to work with; I've never had one come in who was a pain in the ass. They might come in thinking that they don't want to get dirty, and that factory work is not for them. But by the time they leave, they love it! They really get involved, and when they go home they know that they helped to build their own riser. It might be the only thing like that that they've ever done in their life."

Obviously, a large, custom drum cage is geared for large-scale shows. And even Tom's "mini-cage" is still fairly sizeable, requiring a small truck or van to carry it in. Just how portable can a Falcon cage be made?


"Well," Tom replies, "I can cut the base of the riser in half. I've done that for people, and it works great—but nobody wants to pay the extra cost for the assembly hardware. I could make the mini-cage so it would fold up into a suitcase. But it adds to the cost so much that people don't want to do it. That's why I don't care to make so many little cages. With the big ones—which go on the semis—I don't have to take portability into account. What I *do* have to take into account is practicality and functionality. And I have to think of the union stagehands who don't care about the condition of the cage. Drummers and production people don't always remember that the cage is going to get thrown around and dropped, and it has to hold up. I build





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**Richie Hayward**  
(Little Feat)  
Photo: Kristen Dahline




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with that in mind."

What about with sound in mind? Some tubing used for drum cages contains foam soundproofing, but Tom Falcon's does not. As Tom explains, "There's a dampening effect in the density of metal, and my tubing is about three times thicker than most others. But in terms of 'soundproofing,' my feeling is that all cages rattle. A cage isn't a recording tool—it's designed to be a visual enhancement on a stage. It's not going to make the drums sound amazing, and mic's will pick up some sounds that it makes. But you're not going to hear all that in a concert situation. When people tell me that they're going to get a cage and then record with it, I tell them, 'Don't do it. Don't even use your own drums. Use somebody else's drums that are made for recording, and that someone has taken days to get sounding perfect.' You can definitely tell if someone is using a cage in a studio, because it just doesn't work. But I don't make it out to be a recording setup. I might lose a sale for every one I get, because I always tell a customer exactly what my products will and won't do."

How would a drummer go about ordering a cage from Falcon? "Even with the standard or mini-cages," replies Tom, "I still need to know where the drummer is playing his or her drums. A picture of their current setup is all I need—from the front and from the back. I can visualize whether or not everything is going to fit on the cage. I don't want to make something and ship it, only to have the customer discover that it isn't right. There's no bending something once it gets to the customer, and to return it

is virtually impossible. I do sometimes travel and do work 'on the spot' on the big custom cages. But this is usually if I already happen to be traveling for a motorcycle show, or if the drummer's production company wants to pay me for a 'house call.' I don't mind doing it, but it's not cheap.

"With the custom cages," Tom continues, "almost 90% of the time the finished cages are totally different from what the customers originally thought they wanted. Not only because of me, but also because of them. They start with a general idea and we talk it out. But then they see something else that I've made—or perhaps they have something in the back of their mind that they didn't know was physically possible. So we negotiate and price things out, and eventually we come up with a final design."

Tom's operation is in Clearwater, Florida, and most major drummers are based elsewhere. Can some of this design conferencing be done on paper?

"I've tried to give people rough sketches of final designs, but I can't draw worth a damn," admits Tom. "Here I am, trying to sell a big job, and I have to include a note saying, 'Here's my lousy drawing. I can't draw, but I can make this thing out of metal.' I'm looking into a computer graphics program to help me. I could program it with different angles and lengths for tubing, and then it could print out a simple diagram. I think it would be a lot easier to sell my work to bigger acts if I could give them graphic proposals to choose from."

One of the things that has made Tom hesitate to put his

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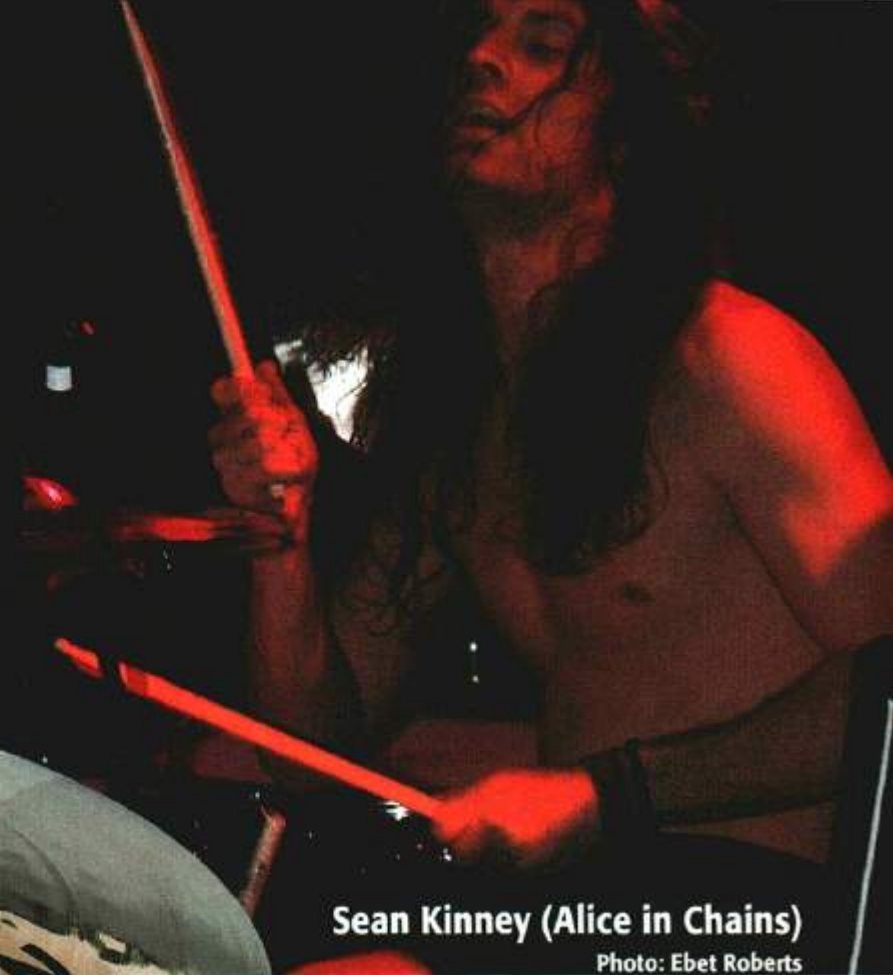
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**Sean Kinney (Alice in Chains)**

Photo: Ebet Roberts

designs on paper is the need to protect them. "People love to take my ideas," he says. "It almost has to get to the point where I get some money up front before I'll even discuss a custom design and give ideas away. And one of the reasons for that is that I put limitations on myself as to what I will and won't build. For example, I agonized over making my standard cage for over two months, because I didn't want it to look like Greg Voelker's. His is great; it's functional, and he's a real craftsman. But I just *can't* copy somebody. My wife, Magdalena, and another guy who was working with me kept saying, 'Well, just put a pipe here...' and I'd say, 'I can't; that's like *he's* got. That's *his* idea; I don't want to do that.' I come up against that a lot, and I don't always make something the way somebody wants, because it will look like Greg's. But coming up with original ideas is really rough, too. People will say, 'Just make me something weird.' Well...jeez, Who knows?

"Right now," Tom continues, "I think the designs have been taken about as far as they can be. It's the same old tubing—no matter how I bend it—and the same old platforms. I've got to come up with something new and different. I made one cage out of square tubing, which looked pretty nice with my spikes and other features. It's not like it'll be a standard—but it's time to get past the standard. I'm real critical of my own work and what I can do; that's why I feel like what I have now is more or less over with. I have to get something wilder—something different. That's the creative artist in me."



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continued from page 31

large ensemble, you hear people say, "The drummer is in the driver's seat; you have to take control." And I suppose when you're playing with a college band, that's the case. After six months with Basie's band, the guitarist, Freddie Green, pulled me aside and said, "Listen, you don't have to push the tempo or pull it. Just listen to the melody and play in the center of it." That was some of the best advice I ever got. These guys knew where the time should be. They executed it right, and all you had to do was come in and play in the middle of that. When I finally did that, it made all the difference in the world. Everything worked. There was no pulling or pushing.

**RF:** Some vocalists have told me that they want the drummer to take the lead, while others say that *they* want to pull the drummer along.

**GF:** It's really neither. If you take the lead, that implies that you're having to take them somewhere and lead them along, which you shouldn't have to do. Sinatra sings it where he wants to hear it. I play the time there. If I'm playing the time in the same place he's singing it, it reinforces the same rhythmic pulse, and everything works and everyone feels supported.

It's a trust situation. I've worked with bandleaders...like Harry—he felt like he was in control, and he was constantly adjusting. It kept it from just flowing. It was like he was trying to *make* it happen instead of letting it happen. So what I learned on Basie's band was to *let* it happen; trust that everything can work, and don't push things.

**RF:** Had you learned how to be a soloist yet?

**GF:** No. That was a big limitation for me. I didn't solo on the Basie band. Basie was real smart. He heard me play a solo, and he knew I just didn't have enough chops to sustain it. Butch Miles was a great soloist; there was no doubt about it. I came in behind Butch, and I didn't have that soloing ability at twenty-four. Because of that limitation, it forced me to spend more time working on just playing groove. For years, I didn't feel I could play interesting drum solos. It's only been in the last four years that I feel like solos

are fun to play. I've found that I can make them interesting and musical.

**RF:** What changed?

**GF:** I probably got more ability and heard more—through osmosis I guess. I worked on it too. There was a long time where I didn't practice when I was on the road, which I really regret. Probably the whole time I was with Basie I didn't practice. I have a lot more ability now than I did twelve years ago, and I really wish I could go back and play with Basie with my ability now, because I could give him that much more. I had just enough ability to make that gig.

**RF:** There was a tune called "Wind Machine."

**GF:** We used to play it too fast. We got it so fast it was ridiculous. It was usually the first tune we played every night, right out of the gate. That's what taught me to warm up before I play. Without warming up, I'd try to play this thing, and I felt like I was on a tightrope, doing a balancing act; any moment I might fall off.

**RF:** How do you warm up?

**GF:** There's an exercise in a Gary Chaffee book called *Patterns* on pages 11 and 12 in the section called "Technique Builder." It's an exercise that goes from playing 16th notes to 32nd notes. It takes about four minutes to do both pages. I do it on a pillow or drum if I can, with some sort of repeating bass drum/hi-hat pattern. By the time I'm done with it, I'm completely warmed up. And playing every night, I'm not too out of shape the next day anyway, but to start with that tune....

**RF:** What happened after the three years you were with Basie?

**GF:** I had been basically living out of New York during that time, so I moved back to LA. I got an opportunity to teach at USC, which was great. Then I got a call to sub on Ella Fitzgerald's gig for Bobby Durham, which was an incredible thrill. She is about as nice a person as I've ever met. I got the call in '84 or '85, when Bobby left. I did it for about a year, up until she had her heart attack.

**RF:** Why was the gig such a joy?

**GF:** It felt like a really prestigious gig. It was kind of another echelon. The money was better, there were better working conditions, and I had always wanted to do it. I had heard Ella with Basie in years past, and I thought that she would be a

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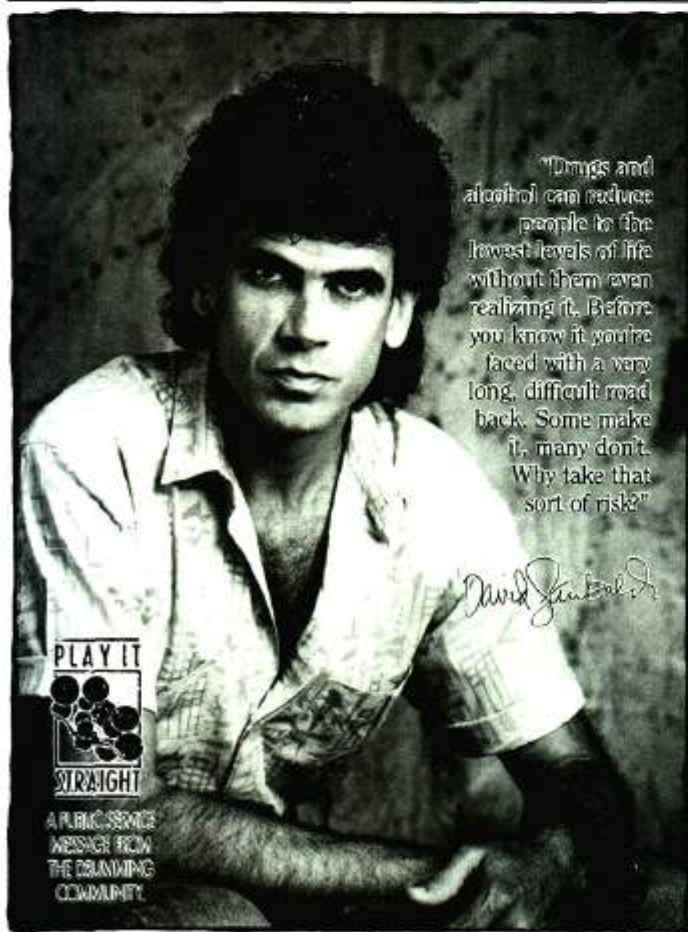
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nice gig. That was another case of my having just enough ability to get the gig. I had never really worked on playing in a small-group jazz thing, and I had to learn how to do it. Fortunately, she wanted kind of a big-band drummer who had small-group sensibilities, but who could still sort of play aggressively behind her. She wanted the bass drum kicking her vocal figures. But it was a different situation, one where you wouldn't play the bass drum on all four beats. It was a jazz trio, or sometimes a quartet.


**RF:** What are those small group sensibilities?

**GF:** You can be more reactionary because things are going to be changing. In a trio, the likelihood is that the piano player is not going to play the same way every night. Of course, Ella is definitely not going to sing it the same way every night. I can float the time more. Instead of having seventeen people relying on me to hold things together, there are only three, so things can breathe a little more. There's more opportunity to play. It's being aware of the impact of the sound that you have.


I learned how to *not* play the bass drum on all four beats. I had a sense that my hands were almost floating on the cymbal and the snare when I was playing time. Instead of digging in and playing the groove, it could just bounce and float. I discovered that I didn't have to be this clock of time, which gave me a whole different outlook on playing the instrument. It freed me up.

I remember playing with Phil Upchurch one time. He can really play fast tempos. It had been my habit to play the hi-hat on 2 and 4 with really fast tempos. I felt like I had to hold things

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together. After doing it for a while, I realized I don't have to hold it together. It will stay together whether I'm playing time or not. When I discovered that, it was like getting out of prison. It was a whole other world to go into, and it changed my playing. I remember the night it happened. I thought, "This is so fast, forget it. I'm not going to try to control it. I'm just going to float my right hand and see what happens." And it worked great. It was a thrill.

**RF:** So after Ella?

**GF:** I've had a relationship with Mel Torme all along. Mel has had the same drummer for years, but whenever that drummer can't make it, I'll get a call from Mel. So after I left Ella, I did a little work with Mel and then continued to teach. USC has been really great because they've allowed me to have my playing career while keeping my teaching position. It's neat for me, because there's growth for me too. Students bring in things they want to learn. It's good for the students, too, because they're studying with people who are out there gathering fresh information. During this time, I did a little session work and began to pursue the production I enjoy as well. In '91, Sinatra called.

**RF:** What's the hardest thing about the Sinatra gig?

**GF:** The hardest thing about that job is the day that it ends, because I love it.

**RF:** Why?

**GF:** It's a thrill to play these incredible orchestrations, usually with thirty-eight, thirty-nine other players—strings, percussion.... I'm playing great arrangements that he's compiled over

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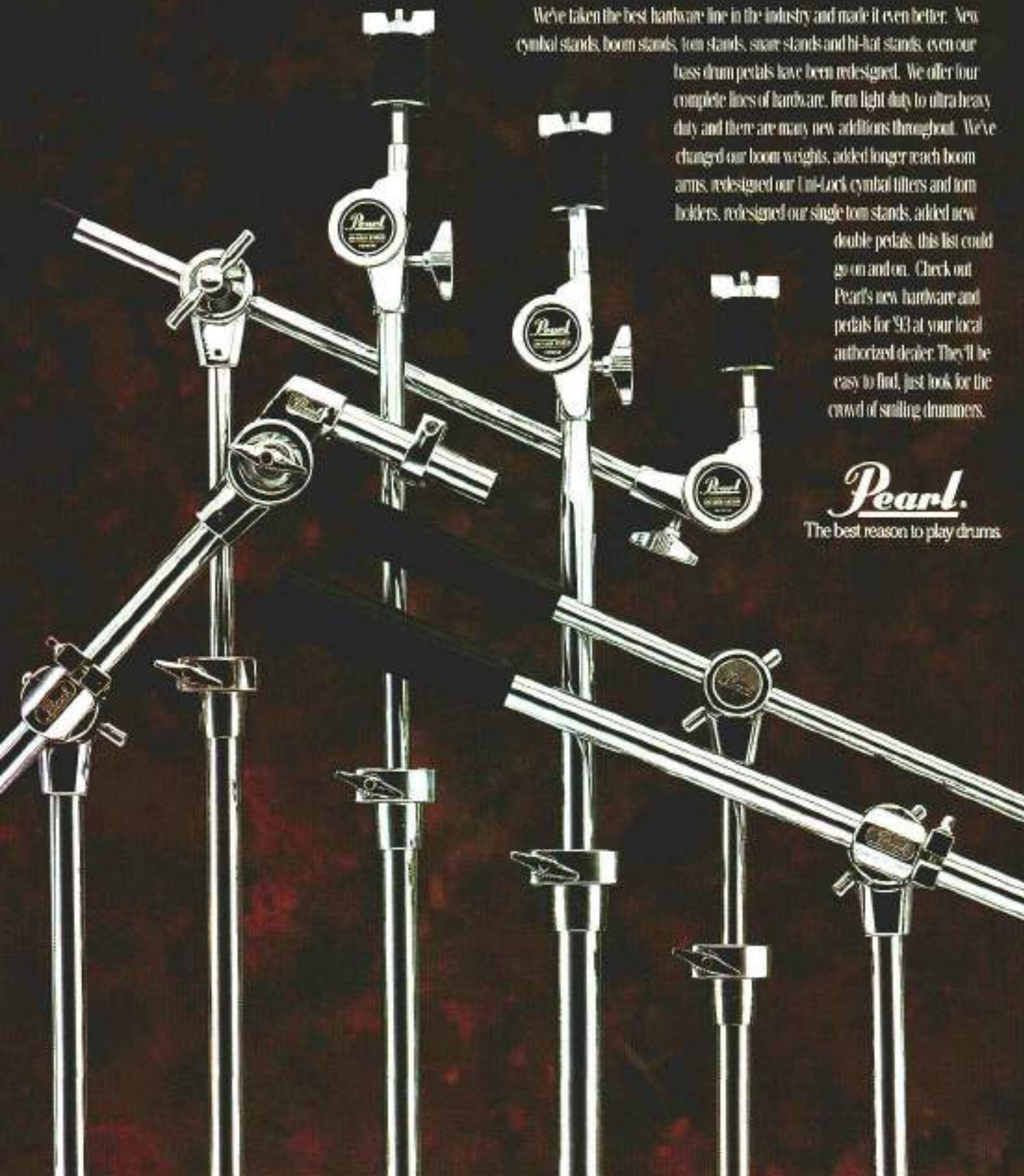
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the years. Some of the tunes are tacit for the drums. I just sit there on some of the ballad stuff, and I can listen to this sound wash around me with Frank Sinatra singing. I was somewhat of a Sinatra fan when I got the gig, but I've become a much bigger fan since I've been with him. I really see what he does. His time is impeccable.

**RF:** How is it playing with an orchestra?

**GF:** I played with some orchestras with Ray Charles, Basie, and Ella. I found them to be really uncomfortable. Great orchestras aren't really set up to function with rhythm sections. The funny thing is that the better the orchestra is, the *less* able they are to play along with the rhythm section. I found it was really a matter of having to ignore what the orchestra was playing. They don't swing, and they just play what they play. It was nice to hear all the strings and everything, but it was taxing for me to try to control it.

With Ella, though, it was pretty cool. She had all this music written with some orchestral stuff, but again, there were sixty or seventy musicians. I remember Ella's conductor, Paul Smith, said, "Don't look at the conductor of the orchestra; just ignore him." Basically we had to force the orchestra to follow us.

Sinatra is another thing. We work with the same four orchestras—one in England, which does all the European stuff, one in New York, one in Chicago, and one in Las Vegas. They've all played his music a lot. It's twelve or fourteen strings, and it's much more controllable. The band part of it includes jazz musicians who understand how to play that style. It's not symphonic musicians trying to play the parts. It works great.

**RF:** You said that your role is more pronounced in a small band situation. This is the ultimate large band.

**GF:** That's just having to be sensitive. There are more voices being played. It's learning not to step on somebody else's part. Sometimes I tell my students that I think in terms of how I would want to mix my sound on a console with the rest of the orchestra. I suggest to my students to imagine sitting in the audience, hearing the whole group that they're playing with. When you're playing, try to expand your awareness outside of yourself. Include the other instruments and how you would mix them all together. Be aware of when someone is playing something. Is what you're playing conflicting with it? The more players there are, the more opportunities for that conflict to come up.

**RF:** This is a very selfless way of playing, and it's interesting that you would love this aspect the most.

**GF:** I'm much more excited about the overall sound than just the drums. In high school, I would go to concerts and think, "Wow, that was a great concert. Did you hear what the drummer played?" Now when I go hear an artist and the drummer is playing something really hot, but it doesn't fit, it annoys me. I'm happy with the bigger picture. I don't want to hear a guy play as fast as he can or play all the chops. I'm not interested in going to a circus. Sometimes I feel like I go to concerts and it's, "Here's the bearded lady...and here's the drummer with the fastest single-stroke roll..." I had to learn the same lesson. I overplayed a lot. When you're learning your instrument, I guess it's only natural to be excited about somebody with a lot of tech-



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nique. But eventually the technique needs to take a back seat to the music.

**RF:** The technique is a tool.

**GF:** Exactly. And just that. When you become impressed more by technique than by the music, you miss the treasure of music. I saw Keltner on a session the other day. I had never heard him record. Stix Hooper was producing Ernestine Anderson for Quincy Jones' label. Joe Sample, Eddie Watkins, and Keltner were on it. That day Keltner was coming from another session, so they were rehearsing without him, and I was sitting there thinking, "What would I play on this?" Keltner came in and sat down and played a simple pattern, and not very loud. I was thinking, "Maybe he's just listening to the parts and feeling his way through the tune." But when they rolled the tape, he didn't do anything different. And the finished product was brilliant. That was a big lesson.

I think the more years you do it, the more aware you are of the impact of your sound, and the less you play. Porcaro, Gadd, Harold Jones—these guys are selfless players. They're just willing to go in

and play the groove. It's organic to them to play that way, and I really admire it. It's been a challenge for me, and I feel I'm just beginning to get to that place where I can really let go.

**RF:** So are you telling us that there is nothing tough about the Sinatra gig?

**GF:** I got the call for this when they were having some drummer problems. It was for a lot of different reasons, and not necessarily because of the way the guys played. Things were real uptight on the gig, and Sinatra wasn't happy. I thought, "What kind of hornet's nest am I walking into? It's a wonderful gig, but I'm just going to come in, do what I do, and not grow attached to it." So I focused on what I had to do musically.

The first job was a tour of Europe. Sinatra was not at the rehearsals in London. We were playing in an arena in Belgium, and I was nervous. I didn't know what to expect, but I figured that since they had fired the four previous guys, musically there must be something really difficult about the job. When we rehearsed, I looked at the book, and it was pretty simple. I knew the tunes. I was

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a fan who had bought his records. I thought, "There must be something else causing the problem. These were good drummers who had been fired." Sinatra walked out on stage and I thought, "Okay, here we go." We started the first tune, and it was like putting on an old shoe. It was real easy and familiar. When it wasn't as hard as I had made it out to be in my head, I relaxed, and when I can relax, it's much better. After Ray Charles, you can pretty much do anything else.

The only difficulty I had was, because we were playing huge arenas, Sinatra was having trouble hearing me. The third night on the gig, we were in Rome in a huge arena. The sound was horrible, and he couldn't hear. I was playing so loud that at the end of the night, I had worn a hole in my hand! I was bleeding on the drums, and it was ridiculous. It's crazy to have to work that hard. It isn't musical and it's annoying to the other musicians to have to play with a drummer who is playing that loud. That's when I went to the soundman. There was some resistance, understandably, because this was the way things had been going for a long time. Since then Rick Southern and I have become good friends—he and Tom Young are the two sound men. They eventually saw the need for the balance. That was one thing that was hindering the other drummers, too. They just weren't being heard. So that was the biggest hurdle. And also, Sinatra had had the same drummer, Irv Cottier, for years and this is what he wanted to hear. People said, "You have to give him some of what Irv did." Whatever I understood about Irv's playing, I did as much of that as I could for him.

**RF:** You mentioned that your other love is R&B. I read an earlier comment you made about the difference between the funk groove and swing.

**GF:** I made a point of really understanding that these are two different types of playing. I let all the jazz sensibilities go when I play R&B. For me, the most important things about playing R&B or funk are the rhythmic pulse and the willingness to play the same beat over and over, to let things work on top of it, to not feel that you have to express yourself by playing a cool fill. In jazz, there is this sense of impending change. One needs to be ready to move and flow with it at any time. I don't have the same sense of having to lay down this strong rhythmic pulse. I can float the time.

When it comes to jazz and R&B, I don't use the same instruments, either. My cymbals completely change. Behind Sinatra I play a 20" A mini cup. I used it with Basie, too, and Sinatra loves it. It has that sort of "old" sound to it. I also use 13" K/Z combination hi-hats with Sinatra because it gets a nice "chick" sound. I'm really aware of the instrument needing to sound different. What really needs to change in the R&B genre is the ride. I've come to love the K *Custom* for the pop or funk stuff. It's too dry to use with Sinatra. So on a bebop or small group gig, I use a dark K 20" ride. I use the Yamaha *Recording Custom* series more on pop and funk gigs, and I use the *Maple Custom* when I need larger tone. I find that the birch shells of the *Recording* series are a little dryer, and they didn't really create a homogenous sound within the orchestra. The maple shells are a lot harder and the drums tend to resonate more. I found that, just by the length of the tone of the toms, I can really fit that sound within the acoustic orchestra.

**RF:** Stylistically, what do you consider Sinatra's gig?

**GF:** Sometimes we do orchestral stuff, sometimes we do big-band stuff, sometimes pop. I guess "New York, New York" is a cross between Basie and show music. On this job, you can't expect to play one style. You have to be aware of the style of the arranger and what he wrote, and try to make that arrangement work in that style. What did the orchestrator do and what are you going to do around it? I've been doing the gig for a year and a half now, and I'm still hearing new things and adjusting.

**RF:** In addition to working with Sinatra, you have other projects going on.

**GF:** I'm finding that I'm being hired as a producer, which I've been pursuing for the last two years. It's all pop/R&B stuff that I produce. It's given me a better perspective on sound and how I want what I play to fit into what's going on. In terms of playing, I feel like I've almost completed a cycle with this whole big-band period in my life. It's slowly winding down and moving into other things.

I find real meaning and joy in many types of music. It seems like it's very hard for someone successful at jazz to move into pop or something. People always say, "Oh, he plays with Sinatra, I guess that's all he does." That's always been a challenge. But it's sort of a fun challenge, because when I find myself having some success in different styles, it's almost like I've beaten the odds.



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# Earl Young

## The Sound Of Philly

■ by Woody Thompson

*An important chapter in American pop music was written in the city of Philadelphia during the 1970s, when the Philadelphia International record label released a seemingly endless string of hit records. Producer/writers Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff—along with producer/arranger Thom Bell—created a unique and extremely successful style of music that came to be known as "The Philly Sound."*

*A highly musical and sophisticated pop form, the sound relied upon strong vocal harmonies, lush string and horn arrangements, and a crack R&B rhythm section at its core. Crucial to this sound •was drummer Earl Young, who, along with Norman Harris on guitar and Ronny Baker on bass, made up the nucleus of MFSB (Mother, Father, Sister, Brother), the PI house band.*

*From the late 1960s through the '70s, Young played on a startling number of hit records by Philly Sound artists. If you've listened to such staples of American popular music as "For The Love Of Money" by the O'Jays, "Me And Mrs. Jones" by Billy Paul, "If You Don't Know Me By Now" by the Stylistics, or "Then Came You" by the Spinners and Dionne Warwick, then you've heard Earl Young play drums.*

*Relatively unknown compared to his counterparts in places like Memphis or Detroit, Young was nonetheless a potent force in the creation of the pop music of the '70s. He is arguably the creator of the disco beat, and the dance tracks laid down by Young and his bandmates in the Philly studios influenced the "house" music of today. Some of the earliest recorded rap music by the Sugar Hill Gang was laid down over MFSB rhythm tracks and Earl's drumming.*

*Young has not only been a session drummer, but also a singer, producer, and music publisher. As leader of the Trammps (well known for their song "Disco Inferno"), Young sings bass vocal and produces and publishes their material.*

**WT:** Tell me about the origin of the Philly Sound.

**EY:** The Philly Sound got started in the 1960s. It was really started by myself and my partners, Norman Harris and Ronald Baker. Sadly, they're both dead now. Norman started doing sessions first as a guitarist, then he called Ronny in to play bass.



One day a drummer didn't show up to play on a session, so they asked me if I could come in. This was around the time that we cut "The Horse," which was an instrumental with Cliff Noble. I was kind of scared because it was my first time in the studio, and I wasn't able to read. Norman said, "Look, just go in there and follow me. When I nod my head, you just make a fill." "The Horse" was actually cut as a vocal, but the flip side had the instrumental version and people liked it better, so it became the hit.

After Philadelphia started getting recognized, we met Gamble and Huff. Kenny Gamble figured it would be easier for him to get a rhythm section already put together than to go out and hire guys. So he started hiring the three of us together so we could develop a sound. We always played together on records and we got the same sound behind every record. We cut Joe Simon's "Drowning In A Sea Of Love," Wilson Pickett's "Don't Let The Green Grass Fool You," Dusty Springfield's "Silly, Silly Fool," all of the Intruders' records, and all of the O'Jays' records.

**WT:** The drum track on "For The Love Of Money" by the O'Jays is classic.

**EY:** As a matter of fact I created that. It wasn't originally a song; it was a groove that we put together in the studio. Gamble and Huff put words to it, and it became a hit.

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It was the same with the MFSB hit "TSOP." They cut a song but they didn't use the vocal—they just used the music. We won a Grammy for that when it was included on the *Saturday Night Fever* album—along with my song "Disco Inferno" by the Trammps. So I won two Grammys for that album—one as a singer and one as a drummer—which is very rare. "TSOP" went on to become the *Soul Train* theme.

**WT:** What other groups did you record for while at Philadelphia International?

**EY:** When Thom Bell started cutting for Philadelphia International, we did the Delfonics, the Spinners, and all the Stylistics tunes. Then we did a Johnny Mathis album, *Johnny Mathis In Philadelphia*. We did B.B. King. You name 'em, we did 'em—people from all over the world. The Whispers came in from California...we did an album with the Four Tops...we produced an album with the Temptations. I recorded everything that Teddy Pendergrass sang with Harold Melvin & the Bluenotes. In that

era we were pretty busy!

I also did an album by Grady Tate, who is a jazz drummer and a singer. It was an album with him singing. When he came into the studio with Thom Bell to sing, I was surprised—and nervous, man! This guy was a legend to me! And here I was playing drums on *his* record. I was proud of that.

**WT:** What makes the Philadelphia Sound unique and special?

**EY:** Philadelphia wanted to have their own sound, like the Motown Sound. Motown was a great family of musicians working together—and Philadelphia had the same thing. You had guys who were crazy about each other. That means a lot on records, because when you go into the studio to work and it's a happy atmosphere, you've got to come up with a hit record! It was really a lot of fun.

It wasn't so much that I was so great as it was that the three of us had a sound together: bass, drums, and guitar. I made very few records without Norman and Ronny. It's easier to cut a session when

you have three guys who know how to work together. My bass player and I were buddies for twenty-five years; he would know my moves before I made them.

Ronny had an old bass—one of the original Fenders. He used to put tape on the strings in a certain kind of way where he would get a certain sound. I might come up with a sock cymbal thing that would give me *my* sound. We knew what we were doing. We wanted to develop our own sound so that when the record came out we would *know* that it was our record. If it was a hit, people would come back again.

That was the whole thing with the Motown Sound too. I *knew* when it was a Motown record. Purdie would play some off-the-wall stuff—all his drum parts were like solos on hit records—so I knew that was Purdie playing when I heard it. We used to kind of have a little competition. When I'd hear something hip that Purdie played on, I'd say, "I'm going to fix him this time. You wait until I do the next O'Jays record...I'm gonna show him

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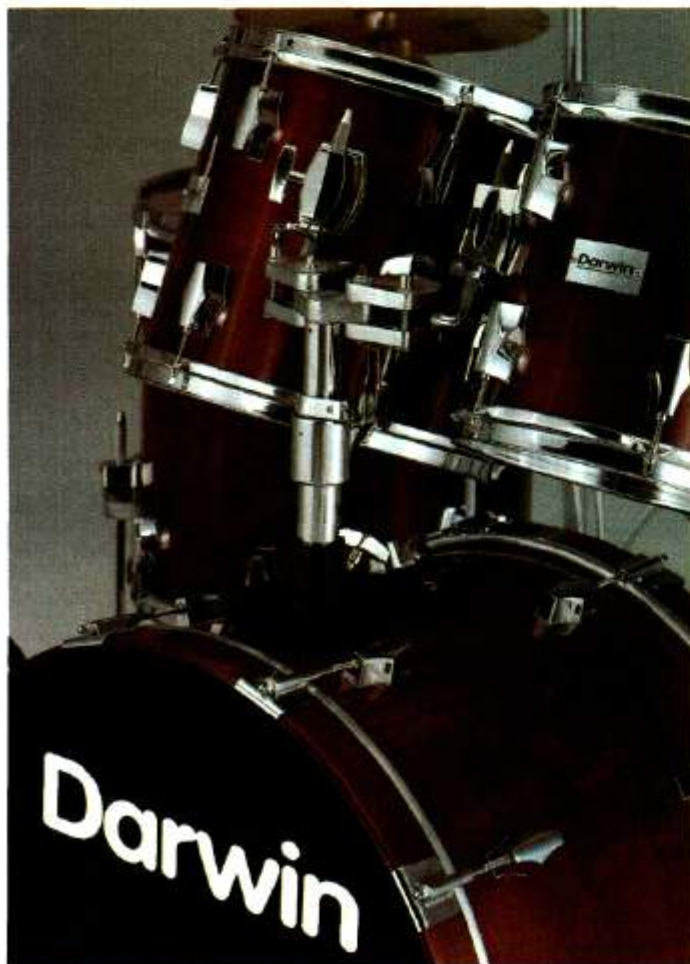
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some shit on this one!" When my record came out, he would listen to it. So it was fun, you know.

**WT:** How did you personally contribute to the Sound of Philly?

**EY:** The "skip beat" was something that I started. The record "Bad Luck" by Harold Melvin has this thing in it where the sock cymbal goes "shee-ik...shee-ik...shee-ik." Nobody else did that before me. They named it disco, but when "Bad Luck" came out, disco wasn't nowhere around. I created the beat with the Spinners. I would play the snare and the tom-tom at the same time, and it would give them a fat sound like the Indians used to have, like BOOM-boom-BOOM-boom-BOOM-boom-BOOM-boom. It worked so well that we used it all the time. It gave the Spinners their own sound.

**WT:** How did you learn to become a session musician?

**EY:** Gamble and Huff taught me everything I know about making records. They

took me in the studio when I didn't know anything, and I learned in the studio. I never went to any school, and I never had another drummer teach me. When I first went into the studio I'd been playing a

cocktail drum with the bass pedal under the drum and no hi-hat. I'd never had a drumset. But I knew how to keep time. And if you can keep time and know how to count eight or sixteen bars, there's no

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reason why you can't make a record. I didn't know anything about songs when I first started. Norman Harris would say, "Look, here's the tempo. Play on 2 and 4. When we get to eight bars, if I nod my head to the side I want you to play this kind of fill; when I do it up and down it's that kind of fill. If I drop the guitar neck, it means crash." We had a routine between us that nobody knew about. No one knew that I couldn't really play as well as I did! This was before I learned how to feel where eight bars and sixteen bars were.

**WT:** Did it become necessary for you to learn to read music?

**EY:** Yes, because with Tommy Bell's stuff you had to read everything. At the time, I used to use mostly memory because I could memorize a whole song—but it got to a point where I had to read. One of the hardest songs I played on was "People Make The World Go Round" by the Stylistics. The whole song goes backward and forward from a 4/4 to a 3/4 to a 6/8. So Norman and Ronald took me into a room and taught me how to read. I would practice every day, because the music was getting hard.

**WT:** Tell me about the creation of the Trammps.

**EY:** I loved to play dance music. Ever since listening to James Brown, who was one of my idols, I wanted to play music that people could dance to. That's how the Trammps got formed. I've always loved to sing, and I figured I could sing as good as most of

the guys I was recording. Being a bass singer, I picked up "Yackety Yak" by the Coasters. The flip side of that was called "Zing Went The Strings Of My Heart." I said, "I can sing this song." So I put up my own money, went in the studio, cut my own record, and put it out. Me, Norman, and Ronny formed our own record production company called Golden Fleece, and we had a hit. So I had my own group. I said, "Now I can play sessions or go on the road and tour." It was a good career for me; I had a chance to do everything I ever wanted to do. Then we had another hit, "That's Where The Happy People Go." When "Disco Inferno" came out, it wasn't a major smash at first. But we got lucky. *Saturday Night Fever* was filmed at a club in Brooklyn called 2001 Odyssey, which was our home club. The producers heard the song and decided to use it in the movie.

**WT:** Did you ever tour with PI groups?

**EY:** I toured with Stevie Wonder for a short time while I was doing sessions in Philadelphia. This was in the late '60s, when he had "Fingertips" out. I just did a few jobs with him. He's a good friend of mine. He taught me a lot about how to play with a big band. The MFSB orchestra would go on tour with a full forty-five-piece orchestra.

**WT:** Are you still active in music?

**EY:** I'm still recording. I recently did something with Phyllis Hyman, and the album went gold. The Trammps are still working, too, and we still sound the same because I have guys who sound like the original guys. The Trammps, the Village People, and a couple of other acts from the '70s recently taped a special for a company called Sky Box, and they're trying to sell it to cable TV. I just did a thing with a group from Chicago called Ten City, which is a house music group. They have a record out called "My Piece Of Heaven." The word "disco" may have become a sort of curse word now, but I don't care what they say: House music is disco music. That's why Ten City flew me to Chicago to record with them. I have to stay in shape to keep up with these young guys.

I've also been working with a company called Good Times Home Video, which used to produce the Salsoul Orchestra. I'm getting into how they make videos, because that's another important part of the business.

**WT:** You've always been pretty versatile in your role in the music business.

**EY:** As a drummer you're limited: You can only play. I wanted to do everything in the music business, because when one thing gets slow, a musician has to be able to go somewhere else. So I learned to produce, sing, write, and everything. In the '80s and '90s I felt a change coming on, so I went into computers. Now I'm programming most of the drum stuff I do.

I feel like I've been very lucky. My favorite thing about the career I picked is the fact that I'm able to be independent. I'm also able to be home with my children. Most fathers don't have that luxury.

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# Making House Calls

■ by Steven Cramer

For eight years I've been traveling to my students' homes to teach the art of drumming. I've turned down offers from local music shops to teach in their practice rooms, preferring instead to stay out "on the road." I'd like to take this opportunity to explain why.

**Drummers come in all shapes and sizes.** So do drumsets. No one is better qualified than the drum teacher to help a student adjust the level of his or her snare, hi-hat, toms, and drum stool so that he or she can play at full potential. For example, I have observed that some of my students "crowd" their kit—sitting so close that they can only play heels up. As a result, they sometimes experience problems playing softly or playing certain rhythmic figures. Moving them back a few inches or adjusting their stool height (as well as demonstrating "heel down" techniques) often helps to correct the problem.

Recently I helped a student solve another coordination problem: whether to set up "right-handed" (with the right foot playing the bass drum) or "left-handed." The student had initially set up in the usual way (right-handed), but despite many demonstrations and reminders, he still led his fills off with his left hand. In addition, he had some problems with right-handed jazz ride patterns. Moving his hi-hat and snare over to the right side of his bass drum enabled him to play most of the patterns and fills that he had found difficult.

**Tuning.** Many students do not have the patience or the ear (at first) to tune their drums. In my case, I didn't learn how to tune my kit properly until I went to college—even though I had been playing and studying drums since age nine. Although I

had a great teacher in junior and senior high school, I took lessons on a practice pad kit at the local music store.

By showing a student how to tune, adjust, and fix his or her own drumset, a drum teacher may impart to a student a certain respect for the instrument. Having a well-tuned kit gives the student more motivation to play.

**Be your own boss.** From a business standpoint, I prefer not to give a percentage to the music store or to be on a payroll. Because I am on the road, my car and its upkeep are tax deductible. Also, I charge a

"I have taught in basements, living rooms, bedrooms, porches, a church, a dance studio, a gymnasium on the day of the concert, and the hayloft of a barn."



little more than the going rate to make up for lost time on the road. I enjoy the break I get between each lesson by listening to practice tapes or having a snack.

**The taxi driver syndrome.** In northwestern Connecticut, where I teach, there are usually three kids in each family, and each kid has to get to soccer practice, karate lessons, choir, or ballet class. Mom or Dad end up being on the road even more than I am, and thus are usually very

grateful that I saved them a trip. For me this is not a huge sacrifice; I schedule by town with about fifteen minutes between lessons for driving, small talk, food, etc. This isn't simply altruism; it's good business. Besides being dedicated to teaching and to showing up every week, I offer a convenience to local families.

**Variety of people and places.** Over the past eight years I have taught in basements, living rooms, bedrooms, porches, a church, a dance studio, a gymnasium on the day of the concert, and (my favorite) the hayloft of a barn. The equipment has ranged from a practice pad to an exact replica of Neil Peart's cherry-wood Tama kit crammed into a student's bedroom. I have met hundreds of people, some of whom are now good friends. I guess some (perhaps most) teachers would prefer a bit more control over their teaching environment, but I find a certain inspiration in the change of scenery. Good teachers are always looking for a fresh approach to reading, writing, and performing. ("Say that a quarter note is equal to one bale of hay. How many bales of hay to a dotted half note?")

No matter where I teach, I find that there are ways to control the lesson environment by laying down a few rules at the beginning. First of all, I stress that this is a private lesson, and that we will need a private space where we will not be disturbed. If the parents and the student are committed to the expense and responsibility of weekly lessons, they should set aside a quiet space for daily practice. I require that there be no "observers" (like little brothers or sisters) who could distract the student. Basically, I feel that if there is an audience of one or more, then the student is performing, not practicing. There is plenty of time outside of lessons when the student can perform what he or she has learned for the family.

**The role model.** Children learn a great deal by imitation. At times I have noticed my language, style of dress, and playing style being imitated. This is no surprise, but it's very important to understand it from a parent's perspective, for two reasons. First, parents want their children to have positive role models. Second, parents

are not going to let just anyone walk into their home. Thus it is important to be clean, well-dressed, polite, and friendly when you are a guest in someone's home. Being honest and articulate doesn't hurt, either.

**Cancellations.** Last-minute cancellations are the nemesis of any service business—especially for people who are spending time and gas on the road. First of all, I ask my students and their parents to call me as soon as they know of a conflict with their lesson time—the night before their lesson at the latest—so that I can reschedule. I have a waiting list; with enough advance notice I can usually fill the time slot. But I still get calls on the day of the lesson, or after I have already left for lessons. If I show up at someone's house and the student is not there, I charge them half a lesson fee. Some parents pay me for the full lesson anyway, which is okay with me. For legitimate last-minute emergencies I don't charge at all. I try to occupy the spare time by making copies of sheet music or by making phone calls.

**Hazards.** Door-to-door education does have its dangers. On one occasion I had to

break up a domestic dispute between a tenant and her boyfriend. And once in a while I encounter the overprotective family dog; I have been bitten once. Now I carry a drumstick in one hand if I suspect any unfriendly dogs are lurking about. (I figure that a rap on the nose would deter most dogs; if the dog looked mean enough I would stay in

the car.)

Like any musician who loves to jam, I enjoy encountering the unexpected. Sometimes the best lessons are improvised. The challenges posed by "house-call" teaching affords plenty of opportunity for such improvisation.



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# Progressive Single-Stroke Endurance Exercise: Part 2

by Joe Morello

Transcribed by Tom Poitras



As I mentioned last month, to drummers, the single-stroke roll is one of the most valuable tools. It consists of alternate sticking, as opposed to the rudimental roll (RR LL), or the multiple-bounce (buzz) roll. The following exercise will be well worth the effort, and should be included in your daily workout.

These exercises should be practiced slowly at first with a metronome, increasing the speed gradually depending on your development. Always practice in a relaxed manner, paying careful attention to the evenness of the strokes.

The following can be thought of as the foundation of this exercise. Play each bar two to four times, or continuously run through the entire study.

This next sequence consists of taking the previous exercise and placing a measure of 16th notes before it.

The image shows a musical score for a drum exercise in 12/8 time. It consists of 11 staves, each containing two measures. The first measure of each staff features a continuous eighth-note pattern (quarter notes in 12/8 time). The second measure features a continuous sixteenth-note pattern. The pattern in the second measure is more complex, involving eighth and sixteenth notes, and includes rests. The exercise is designed to be played with both hands.

The next sequence would consist of two complete bars of 16th notes before the original sequence. You can add as many measures of 16ths as your development will allow. Stay relaxed and be sure to start them with both hands.





# Taking Direction: The Drummer's Sixth Sense

by Philip Hopkins

The world of drumming has produced more than its fair share of creative and original musicians. I attribute this to the fact that drumming requires more interpretation and imaginative input than most other instruments, since drummers are rarely presented with highly notated music parts. If you look at the band parts of a Broadway show, for example, you will find that the drummer is allowed more flexibility in the way he or she plays the part than the brass or reed players are.

This artistic freedom cuts both ways, though. As drummers, we are generally in a position of interpreting the musical wishes of others in the absence of totally written-out parts, so we have to become competent in understanding what is required. We need to "take direction." This is what the best and busiest players are good at. They develop a sixth sense that tells them what is required, and they use this instinct to provide what is right for the music.

The sixth sense should start functioning as soon as we walk into a new situation. When I need to learn a new song, I am always inspired by the example of two legendary drummers, Steve Gadd and Dave Mattacks. Producer Gary Katz once said of Gadd, "He's the one who's the most interested in your song." This is a profoundly simple pointer in the direction of success. It encourages us to look out from under our cymbals and remember the wider context of our musical efforts.

A friend of mine reported back from having observed British studio ace Dave Mattacks at work: "He constantly referred to piano charts, asked about the overall arrangements, and insisted on reading lyric sheets to pick up the atmosphere of the song." Gadd and Mattacks not only receive direction in a friendly way, they seem

to *invite* it. Remember, too, that these players are so well-prepared in terms of technique and equipment that on the session their minds are free to dwell only on creating the music.

Though most of us actually work live more than in studios, it is in the bars, clubs, and theaters that the "sixth sense" begins to work overtime. Beyond the important demands of interpreting the music, we now have other things to worry about.

One area well worth concentrating on is that of volume level, or dynamics. If you're playing in a piano trio, for instance, don't play louder than the piano. It *is* forgivable to test the waters and bring the volume level up occasionally to see if the pianist responds to the stimulation. But if he's running the show, once he tells you to watch the volume level, that's it. Musical directors do *not* appreciate giving instructions twice.

It's actually amazing how much work goes to drummers who know how to play softly; this is an aspect of our job that other musicians are obsessed with. I was recently involved in Stephen Sondheim's show *Assassins* in London, and I would estimate that eighty percent of the notes to the band during the rehearsal period involved the use of dynamics.

On Broadway/West End style shows, the secret is to play softly behind the singers so that their words can be heard, and really play out in chorus and dance numbers. Your sensitivity will be noted—and approved.

The ability to take direction cheerfully—and, indeed, to accept constructive criticism in the right spirit—is, along with sound musical skills, the essential factor that helps free-lance musicians stay in business. To achieve this, we must accept that by the very nature of the music business, the drummer is on the receiving end of a long chain of command. In a theatrical show, for example, the producer hires the production team, which hires the contractor, who hires the musicians. The musicians have to accept that what they are being asked to do might not always be the way they would choose to do it, but that they are doing it to keep someone, somewhere, happy. Perhaps the choreographer needs stronger kick drum accents for the dancers to count off of. Or the soundman

can't handle too much hi-hat leaking into the violin mic's. If you mark your part and help these people out, it will be remembered.

One of the most interesting jobs I have done involved a live

"The ability to take direction cheerfully is, along with sound musical skills, the essential factor that helps free-lance musicians stay in business."



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broadcast where the sound engineer had too many inputs to give the drums anything other than a stereo mix. So, with the help of his instructions, I had to constantly balance all the elements of my kit throughout the show to help him out. Naturally he had to pay for it at the bar later on! The point is, as the pressure mounts in these situations, it is a fact of life that more and more people will be telling us what to do. We just have to learn not to take it personally.

The ability to "take direction" may seem a passive or negative goal, but if you're going to regularly face new musical situations, it's the only way to convince fellow musicians and prospective employers that you're a safe bet. I take heart from the fact that the greatest drummers can use the tight constraints of a musical situation as a stimulus to creativity. Accept "taking direction" as the name of the game, and turn it to your advantage.



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# Session Playing: Becoming An Instant Bandmember

■ by Michael Blair

What do you do when you are called in to record with a group that already has a drummer? Sometimes a songwriter needs a breath of fresh air, or a different approach. Sometimes the existing drummer isn't cutting it. Sometimes the band and producer just can't make up their minds.

As players and interpreters, it is our job to help the artist retain enthusiasm for his or her own music. By the time session players see and hear the music, it has been in the songwriter's mind for anywhere from a few weeks to a couple of years. Whether a situation is new or old, heavy pressure or relaxed fun, we must bring all of our brainpower and enthusiasm to it.

Each recording can be quite different, too. Some artists and producers would rather the players shut up and do what they are told. Outside suggestions are not solicited. At best, the "authority figures" have clear ideas and want the musicians to embellish them. At worst, we are treated like servants, the musical equivalent of painting by numbers.

Other situations involve more of a team or family effort. The artist allows and desires deeper interplay and psychological give and take. Intense negotiation and arguments can be constructive. Personality and character are as important as notes and precision.

So our challenge is to read the situation and act accordingly. How far can one push before stepping across the line? And conversely, when is the player pushed beyond the point of efficient thinking, where he or she becomes merely a punching bag for the producer's insecurities?

In this article, I would like to reflect upon some "hot seat" recording experiences and discuss aspects of what it took to make them successful musical collaborations.

A situation I found myself involved with a couple of years ago involved the Replacements' *All Shook Down* album. Bandleader Paul Westerberg approached the record more as a solo project than a band project, and he brought in players as he saw fit. This created quite a bit of tension, as the band's original drummer was left out of most of the process. After first being called in to add percussion, I found myself replacing drum machine programs and completely redoing existing tracks.

Knowing full well the turmoil surrounding the band's drum chair, I made believe I was Paul Westerberg's drummer. Psychologically, that allowed me to dive straight into the music and not be concerned with any future issues. I was there to propel and glue together the guitar and bass parts. I tried to become instantly familiar with the sound of Paul's voice and what he was after as a storyteller. This doesn't mean I "studied" anything or even heard the songs before I began recording. In fact, I rarely knew what was coming next. Producer Scott Litt and Westerberg simply played me tapes and asked, "What would you do with this?" I did know they wanted to feel a kick in the pants, something to energize the tracks. They were already in the mixing stage and had heard the tunes a zillion times. What I was faced with were basically completed tapes. It was *my* job to provide a "wake-up call." Since they weren't happy with the original drum parts, I didn't want to hear them. We got drum sounds as quickly as possible and went to work.

The Replacements were an aggressive, gutsy rock 'n' roll band with unusually intelligent and thoughtful songs. As a drummer, my nut to crack was finding a way to frame the voice clearly while still propelling the grinding guitars.

I always carry note pads with me and write the number of measures, sections, and cues. After writing down the song structures, I decided how I wanted things to build and develop. Then it was "jump in the driver's seat and roll the tape." Thinking too hard would have spoiled everything. But I needed to start from some point of reference.

Even though I wanted to express a bit of recklessness, the process was not random or haphazard. The "correct" snare drums were found only after picking through the ten or so I bring to every session. I used Remo *Fiberskyn* heads on my low toms and bass drum to give a warm "whump," which fit the grooves better than the hyper-clear digital-ness so popular now.

Though the original parts were cut to a click track, none of the instruments were actually sequenced, and everything moved around a little bit. To sound like I was really in the band, I needed to play with the same attitude, so my playing with metronomic perfection would not serve the tension already there.

Also, it is part of the performer's job to let the producer and engineer know exactly when he or she is ready to rock. Not catching the best moment wastes everybody's time. And a potentially difficult situation is made a lot easier when the artist and producer can really tell when things are right. Constant indecision can be deadly. There are so many options in the recording process. Too many beautiful moments are lost due to lacks of vision, sense of humor, and knowing when to quit.

Allowing myself to become a replacement Replacement made it possible for the songwriter and producer to be more precise concerning what they needed from me. Plus, we all trusted each other's concern over what was best for each song.

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In the end, the music won, as it always should.

Now here's one of those potential nightmares that worked out well for everyone. L.A. session ace Denny Fongheiser found himself in a similar hot seat to the one I just described. In preproduction and tracking with an original band, the parts, time, and performances were not working out. According to Denny, "I originally wanted to go in and help the drummer figure out how to approach the problems and solve them then and there. Maybe I could play some of the tracks, but he would still be on the record. But the band had already sent him home! Meanwhile, another drummer had come in to replace the tracks, but he didn't work out either. So I listened to the original drummer's tracks and tried to identify what was special about his contribution to the band. Ultimately, we re-cut all the songs, but at least I had a good idea of what the band sounded like.

"The original drummer is back in the group and is on the road," Denny continues. "He's using a headphone click track, and is becoming much stronger and more consistent." Denny says that since the project was marketed as a "band," no individual playing credits were included for the session fixers. You give a little, and take a little; that's showbiz.

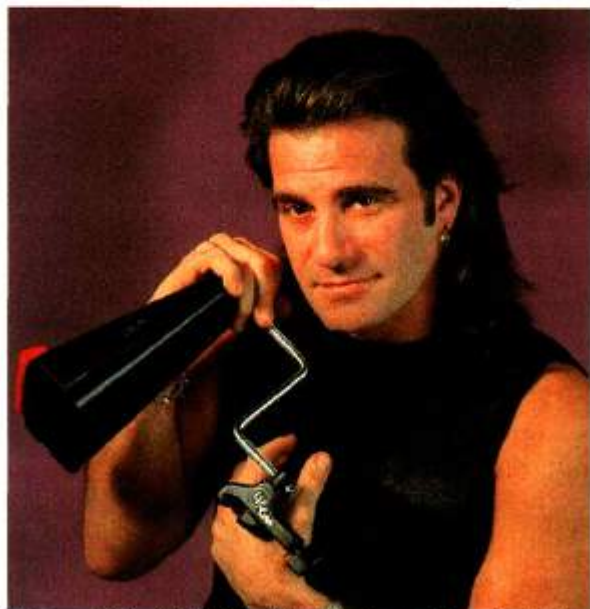
Denny related another experience to me. A young band had been making an album, but the time wasn't quite right. So the

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producer called Denny in. "The drummer's musicianship and parts were interesting," Denny recalls, "but the group wasn't sure what to do. I played on the drummer's kit so they could hear sounds they were used to. The band decided to re-cut everything. I thought it was important to retain the band's identity, so I listened to the original tracks and made adjustments. They wanted the band 'looseness' to be intact, but they needed a more studio-like sound. The original drummer is actually on a few tracks. In the end, it's up to the band and producer to pick which performances work the best."

By being patient and not having a "star attitude," Denny helped avoid a psychological and professional train wreck. And the band's young drummer got important tips on how to improve his playing/recording.

As replacement drummers, it is our responsibility to help identify the most useful and inspired additions to the songwriter's world. We are not asked to be involved in the mixing process for most projects, and we can't expect anyone to read our minds. And since we are entering a "band" situation, we don't have the luxury of the shorthand communication that only comes from hanging out with people for a long time. So we must state our case clearly and with confidence, right when the recording goes down. That essential in-the-studio focus is worth at least as much as the actual notes one plays.



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With the advent of electrified Beat and Rock music, higher volume and attack requirements led drum manufacturer's to offer thicker, more massive shells, suggesting that "more mass means more power". However, this is generally not true. Besides, the thicker the shell, the higher its pitch. When you get into larger toms and bass drums, this is definitely not desirable.

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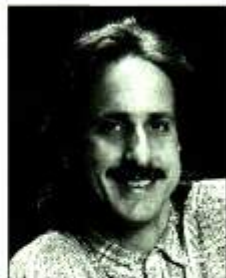


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# The Melvin Parker Connection

by Chuck Silverman



**MUSIC KEY**

Open	O	R	C	Bd
H.C.	X			
S.D.				
B.D.				

Melvin Parker is one of the unsung heroes of pop music. His drumming with the James Brown band was the backbone of many JB hits. The April '92 issue of *Modern Drummer* has a great feature on the drummers of James Brown, in which Melvin's playing is transcribed and his interesting history is explored. I suggest you dig out your issue and check out the feature.

How do Melvin's drumming and Afro-Cuban music mix? What's the relevance? Those of you who read my previous column regarding the drumming of Bernard Purdie might recall that there's a communality of feels between funk and Latin. There is a certain evenness to the playing that infects the grooves and gives them motion. Both styles judiciously complement each other, and by mixing grooves, interesting applications can be created.

Melvin's brother is Maceo Parker, the great saxophonist who was also with James Brown. Maceo cut an album called *Maceo And All The King's Men*, which features the track "Funky Women." When I first heard this track I was floored. There was no backbeat at all, but Melvin was groovin' right along. I immediately set to work transcribing and learning the track. All 16ths are played during the four-measure phrase. In the transcription presented here, the first measure is repeated three times, followed by measure 4. Once you've learned the groove, put on a "Latin" track of medium tempo, and you'll see how well the two grooves work together.



To make this pattern a bit more "Latin," I added sections of the Latin bass part (tumbao) and applied it to the bass drum. The hands remain the same. It's very important to maintain the

flow, the evenness.



Here's the pattern with another bass drum part. Some of you will already be familiar with this pattern.



Next is a groove that involves a different mix of sounds. A cowbell is added along with the hi-hat opening on the "&" of each beat. A variation of this beat was shown to me by a drummer in Miami, Nelson "Flaco" Padron. Interestingly, the snare pattern was exactly the same as the one on the Melvin Parker groove.

In this groove, the right hand plays bell on the downbeats and open hi-hat on the upbeats. The hi-hat is closed with the foot on the downbeats.



Developing as a drummer has a lot to do with maturity as an individual. Knowing what to play and when to play it and developing a feel are of paramount importance. By examining some of the roots of funk drumming and applying them in a quasi-Latin context, I hope you can see the connections between the two styles. Perhaps you can then develop what to play and place it in the "right place" with a certain confidence. As always, your questions and/or comments are welcome. Please write to me c/o *Modern Drummer*.



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## DW Receives Loan For Environmental Improvements

In a successful effort to prevent the loss of another job-producing California business, State Treasurer Kathleen Brown recently announced the awarding of a low-cost loan under the treasurer's CLEAN (California Loans for Environmental Assistance Now) Program to Don Lombardi, owner of Drum Workshop, Inc., one of the last full-line drum manufacturers in America. Lombardi said that the CLEAN loan, used to finance the purchase of equipment needed to cut air pollution emissions and comply with environmental regulations, was a key factor in his decision to keep his company in California.

The \$60,000 loan will be used to purchase a new, more environmentally safe paint spray booth, drying room, and dust collection system to meet the Ventura

County Air Pollution Control District's environmental regulations. The more efficient equipment is designed to cut down on the amount of lacquer needed to coat drums, resulting in a 33% decrease in the amount of emissions released into the air. In addition, the loan has allowed Lombardi to expand to a larger facility and increase the number of employees from thirty-seven to forty-five. He also expects to hire another twenty-five workers in the next two years.

## Wilkes Drum Clinic Internationally Broadcast

Pearl clinician and Berklee School of Music faculty member Steve Wilkes was featured in an intercontinental drum clinic broadcast live on MCET educational television. Hundreds of school systems across the country subscribe to MCET.

In the clinic, Wilkes discussed the ori-

gin of rhythmic structures from Africa and Japan while exploring the modern drumset, which originated in America. The highlight of the performance linked Wilkes, live via satellite, with Tokyo for a video performance with a local Japanese folk musician.

## PureCussion RIMS Offered With Several Companies' Drums

Several drum manufacturers have been added to the list of companies now offering PureCussion's RIMS tom-mounting system as factory options. Hoshino (USA), Inc. are now offering certain Tama kit models with RIMS mounts, as are Impact, Mapex (on their top-of-the-line series), and Pearl. Lang Percussion and the Grover company will offer RIMS mounts as well.



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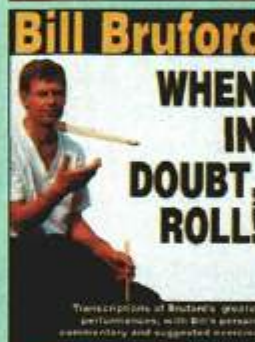
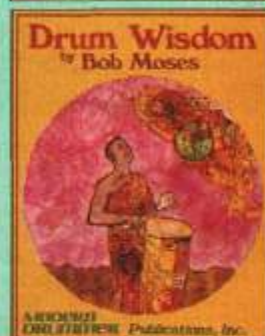
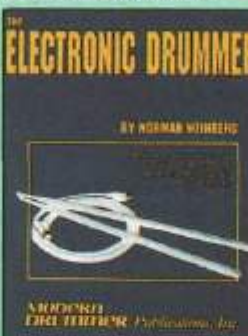
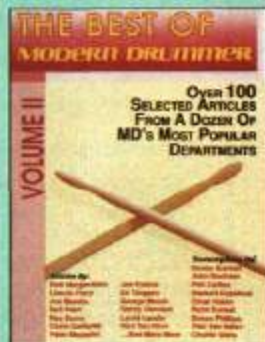
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1. Photos must be in color and of high quality. (35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered. Polaroids cannot be accepted.)
2. You may send more than one view of the kit, but only one photo will be published.
3. Photos should be of drums only; no people should be in the shot.
4. Drums should be photographed against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds such as in your basement, garage, or bedroom.
5. Be sure that those attributes of your kit that make it special are clearly visible in the photo.

Send your photo(s) to:

Drumkit Of The Month,  
Modern Drummer  
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Please note that photos cannot be returned, so don't send any originals you can't bear to part with.

Baltimore drummer Robert Lasky tours up and down the East Coast in a group called Tattoo Taxi—hence his concept for this thematic kit. It's a Yamaha RTC kit with Paiste cymbals, mounted on a Pearl rack. The hardware was colorized by Baltimore Percussion and Colorlife; the illustrations on the bass drums are by Baltimore artist Skip Eckard.

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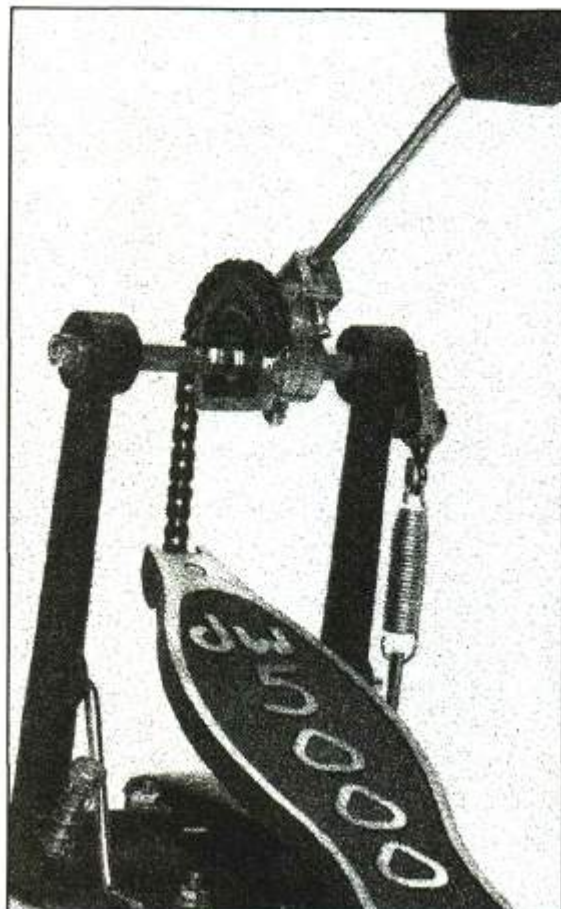
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